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# MAURITAS A30

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## Procedure for assessment of Product Certification Bodies

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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 assessment of Product Certification Bodies

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure shall ensure a harmonised approach and correct execution of the processes associated with the accreditation of Product Certification Bodies (PCBs).

## 2 Scope and Responsibilities

- 2.1 This procedure sets out how MAURITAS assessments are to be carried out in order to assess a PCB's compliance with ISO/IEC 17065, MAURITAS requirements and any other requirements at sub-regional, regional and international levels. The procedures described in this publication apply not only to preliminary visit and initial assessment visit, but also to visits after accreditation has been granted, for the purposes of assessment, re-assessment, witnessing assessment, extension of scope, on-site clearance of non-conformities, extra-ordinary visits or other purposes.

## 3 References

The following documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of the MAURITAS accreditation system. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. For undated MAURITAS references, the latest edition of the document referred to, applies. MAURITAS maintains a register of the current valid MAURITAS accreditation documents.

- 3.1 **ISO/IEC 17065** : Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- 3.2 **ISO/IEC 17067** : Conformity assessment – Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes
- 3.3 **ISO/IEC 17011** : Conformity assessment – Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- 3.4 **MAURITAS A Series documents**
- 3.5 **MAURITAS G Series documents**
- 3.6 **MAURITAS R Series documents**
- 3.7 **IAF MD 25** : Criteria for evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes
- 3.8 **ILAC/IAF JWG A-Series FAQ1**

## 4 Definitions

### 4.1 Accreditation

A third-party attestation related to a Certification Body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific audit and certification activities.

#### **4.2 Renewal**

Renewal is an official recognition of the fact that an organisation has maintained a management system and competence in accordance with the conditions to remain accredited. Renewal takes place every 4 years after first time accreditation and is executed in the same way as for the first time accreditation.

#### **4.3 Major nonconformities**

Nonconformities that affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results.

#### **4.4 Minor nonconformities**

Nonconformities that do not affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results.

#### **4.5 Assessment programme**

Set of assessments consistent with a specific accreditation scheme that the accreditation body performs on a specific certification body during an accreditation cycle

#### **4.6 Assessment plan**

Description of the activities and arrangements for an assessment

#### **4.7 Accreditation Body personnel**

Internal or external individuals carrying out activities on behalf of the accreditation body

#### **4.8 Assessor**

Person assigned by an accreditation body to perform, alone or as part of an assessment team, an assessment of a conformity assessment body

#### **4.9 Team Leader**

Assessor who is given the overall responsibility for the management of an assessment

#### **4.10 Technical Expert**

Person assigned by an accreditation body, working under the responsibility of an assessor, who provides specific knowledge or expertise with respect to the scope of accreditation to be assessed and does not assess independently. However, a technical expert can work in an area alone if an Assessor/Team Leader is available and periodically checking and communicating with the technical expert (this includes also keeping in touch via email or telephone or a mobile application).

#### **4.11 Product Certification Body**

Third-party conformity assessment body operating product certification schemes

#### **4.12 Product Certification Scheme**

Certification system related to specified products, to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply.

#### **4.13 Scheme Owner**

Person or organisation responsible for developing and maintaining specific certification schemes

## **5 General**

**5.1** MAURITAS is responsible for the accreditation of PCBs during which the technical competence of bodies carrying out product certification is evaluated against ISO/IEC 17065 and the requirements of MAURITAS. PCBs can operate product certification schemes which may need to be reviewed by MAURITAS before determining suitability for accreditation. The man-days for scheme review would depend on extent of suitability determination during document review. The application shall be accepted and registered only after determination of suitability of the scheme(s) as per **MAURITAS A31**.

**5.2** Before applying for accreditation, the applicant PCB shall have met the following conditions:

- Operated the certification process such that decision making stage has been completed. This is necessary to assess the ability of the PCB to carry out the certification process as per the documented

system. In case the same is not implemented, the PCB should inform MAURITAS and the Director will decide whether this deviation can be accepted based on the justification provided;

- Carried out a minimum of one internal audit against the applicable criteria of accreditation including the applied scheme/scope for accreditation, one management review for the documented management system and one meeting of the impartiality committee, if established;
- Product Certification scheme meets the requirements of MAURITAS policy on Conformity assessment schemes and is accepted by MAURITAS.

**5.3** Each applicant PCB provides basic information regarding the product certification scheme under which they carry out certification, relevant scope of activities (type of scheme and products/processes), standards used and technical resources in the relevant Application Form (**F 5.01**), duly completed cross-reference matrices (**F 5.02** and **F 5.03**), scheme review checklist where applicable (**F 5.08**), its Quality Documentation, a copy of the relevant product certification scheme and payment of the applicable application fees at the time of application.

The competence of the PCB is evaluated through office assessments and witnessing activities. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether the PCB complies with **ISO/IEC 17065** and the MAURITAS requirements for accreditation (**R Series** documents).

In some circumstances specialised publications issued by MAURITAS or other national, regional or international organisations, for example the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and endorsed by MAURITAS, provide interpretations of these requirements.

**5.4** Assessors/Technical Experts are used to evaluate the competence of the PCBs to perform the product certification in the scopes for which accreditation is sought. There are three stages of the assessment comprising:

- Assessment of the documentation of the PCB;
- Assessment of the office of the PCB including branch offices/locations;
- Witness of the audit/evaluation being carried out by the PCB.

**5.5** All information obtained before, during or after an assessment, including the fact that a particular PCB has applied for accreditation, or that an application for accreditation has been deferred or rejected, shall be treated as strictly confidential and as MAURITAS proprietary by the Team Leader, MAURITAS Staff (hereafter referred to as MS), Assessors/Technical Experts and Accreditation Committee.

**5.6** MAURITAS makes use of Assessors/Technical Experts contracted from external sources to assess PCBs on its behalf. All MAURITAS Assessors/Technical Experts, including MS acting as Assessors, must satisfy the requirements as defined in **MAURITAS A2**, in terms of their technical and professional qualifications, expertise and experience, and must have attended and satisfactorily completed such training as MAURITAS may specify.

**Note:** A MS may also act as an Assessor if qualified as an assessor.

**5.7** A MS will visit the PCB as part of the Assessment Team where the assessment does not require the presence of a Team Leader. Technical Experts will also be accompanied by a MS as the latter, being familiar with MAURITAS policies, procedures, regulations and the relevant applicable accreditation standard, will be able to respond to enquiries from the PCB on such matters during assessment visits. The MS will also assist the Technical Expert with the interpretation of MAURITAS requirements in appropriate circumstances.

**5.8** MAURITAS assessment procedures are applicable to all sizes of PCBs with product certification schemes satisfying the criteria of MAURITAS. Assessors must take into account the size and complexity of the organisation when assessing the management system of a PCB. The management system must provide assurance that the PCB, whatever its size or complexity, meets the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and MAURITAS.

## 6 Processing of applications

**6.1** A PCB wishing to be accredited by MAURITAS, or to extend its accreditation, first completes and submits to MAURITAS the relevant Application Form, **F 5.01** providing details of the product certification scheme under which they carry out certification, relevant scope of activities (type of scheme, IAF scope and products/processes), standards used and technical resources, duly completed cross-reference matrices (**F 5.02** and **F 5.03**), scheme review checklist where applicable (**F 5.08**), its Quality Documentation, a copy of the relevant product certification scheme and pays the applicable application fees.

**6.2** On receipt of the application form and associated documentation, the Director of MAURITAS (hereinafter referred to as the Director) forwards same to the Head of Product Certification and Training (PCT) Section to deal with the application. The Head of the PCT Section will:

- review the application form for its completeness
- review the suitability of the product certification scheme in line with MAURITAS requirements, in case of a new scheme
- recommend the number of witnesses to be done within the scheme

before assigning a Case Officer to further process the application. The Case Officer will discuss with the PCB's representative of any shortcomings during the processing of the application and provide information on the number of witnesses to be done by MAURITAS as per **MAURITAS A24**, in order to be able to recommend the scopes sought by the applicant PCB.

As far as possible, MAURITAS also ensures that the same Case Officer is responsible for the processing the PCB's application throughout its accreditation stage and for liaising with the PCB representative.

**6.3** The Case Officer ensures that the application form and cross-reference matrices have been correctly and fully completed and examines the Quality documentation to check that it addresses all the key elements of a management system as specified in **ISO/IEC 17065** and relevant **MAURITAS R** Series documents. If there are obvious major omissions, the documentation is returned to the applicant for revision.

**6.4** The Case Officer proposes an Assessment Team comprising a Team Leader, Assessors or MS together with Technical Experts taking into consideration the scopes of activities the PCB applied for. The Case Officer shall carry out a preliminary resource review exercise (**F 1.09**) to determine the ability of MAURITAS to perform the assessment and decision making in terms of MAURITAS policy and procedures, competence and availability of suitable Team Leaders, Assessors and Technical Experts. The review shall also take into consideration the ability of MAURITAS to carry out the assessment in a timely manner as defined in **Annex A**.

MAURITAS shall inform the applicant PCB if it is not able to carry out the initial assessment in a timely manner. The Application Form, Quality documentation and proposals for Team Leaders/Assessors/ Technical Experts filled in the resource review form, **F 1.09**, are then submitted to the Head of Section for recommendation and to the Director for approval.

**6.5** In the event that MAURITAS is not able to have the required resources, the PCB will be informed that its application cannot be processed further.

**6.6** In the event that MAURITAS can process the application, the Case Officer will perform a resource review for document review using **F 1.09** to the Head of Section for recommendation and to the Director for approval. Before confirming the composition of the Assessment Team with the PCB, MAURITAS shall request all the proposed members of the assessment team to declare any former, existing or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves/their parent organisation and the PCB to be assessed by filling the form **F 1.23**. In the event that one or more of the proposed team members declare any interest or link, the Case Officer shall repeat the resource review process with new proposed team members.

**6.7** The Case Officer then informs the applicant of the proposed Assessment Team (and the organisation to which they belong) who have been selected to perform the document review prior to starting the exercise. A new Assessment Team shall have to be appointed if the team is not accepted by the applicant, and actions shall be recommended based on the applicant's valid reasons. However, if the reasons are not considered to be valid and local Team Leaders/Assessors/Technical experts are not available, the PCB shall have to bear the cost of using foreign Team Leaders/Assessors/Technical experts.

**6.8** Once the Assessment Team has been finalised, the Case Officer shall request the team to fill in the Declaration of Confidentiality form **F 1.02** and submit same to MAURITAS. Thereafter, the Case Officer shall send them a copy of the Quality documentation and cross-reference matrices (**F 5.02** and **F 5.03**) submitted by the PCB to the Team for document review, together with any comments that may be appropriate. The document review exercise shall be performed only once by the assigned Assessment Team for a particular application made by a PCB and shall be completed within 3 months of receipt of documentation by the Assessment Team.

**6.9** Following the document review using the relevant cross reference matrices (**F 5.02** and **F 5.03**), the Assessment Team shall provide the filled forms, together with a document review report, **F 5.04**, to MAURITAS, giving detailed comments on the PCB's compliance with the relevant accreditation standard and MAURITAS requirements. The Assessment Team shall recommend which of the following actions should be taken:

- a) the organisation is not in a position to proceed to a preliminary visit; or
- b) the organisation is ready for a preliminary visit; or
- c) the organisation is ready for an initial assessment.

**6.10** The Case Officer shall then forward the document review report together with the recommendation of the Assessment Team to the Director for approval. The document review report is then transmitted to the PCB together with the recommendation.

**6.11** In the case that MAURITAS decides not to proceed with the on-site assessment based on the nonconformities identified during the document review exercise and recommendation of the Assessment Team, the nonconformities shall be reported to the PCB in writing.

**6.12** If at any time, there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour or if the applicant PCB intentionally provides false information or if the applicant PCB conceals information, MAURITAS shall take necessary actions to reject the application or stop the accreditation process.

## **7 Preliminary Visit**

**7.1** In the event that the Team Leader recommends or the PCB requests that a preliminary visit be carried out, the Case Officer will make the arrangements for the visit, including an estimate for the assessment fee.

**7.2** Where the recommendation of the Team Leader differs from what the PCB wants, MAURITAS will then discuss with the PCB so as to reach a mutually agreed way forward.

**7.3** Only 1 preliminary visit shall be carried out by MAURITAS per application made by a PCB.

**7.4** The preliminary visit, which is carried out by an Assessment Team is completed in 1 day. Before confirming the composition of the Assessment Team with PCB management, MAURITAS shall request all the proposed members of the assessment team to declare any former, existing or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves/their parent organisation and the PCB to be assessed by filling the form **F 1.23**. In the event that one or more of the proposed team member declares any interest or link, the Case Officer shall repeat the resource review process with new proposed team members.

The Case Officer then advises the applicant of the proposed Assessment Team (and the organisation to which they belong), the assessment dates and fees to be charged at least two weeks prior to the preliminary visit. New Team Leaders/Assessors/Technical Experts shall be appointed if they are not accepted by the applicant, and actions shall be recommended based on the applicant's valid reasons. However, if the reasons are not considered to be valid and local Team Leaders/Assessors/Technical Experts are not available, the PCB shall have to bear the cost of using foreign Team Leaders/Assessors/Technical Experts.

**7.5** The preliminary visit allows the Assessment Team to discuss with the PCB management the extent to which the PCB's management system, Quality documentation comply, or not, with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and MAURITAS requirements.



**7.6** The visit shall be structured such that the Assessment Team can ascertain that the essential components of a management system have been put in place or have been addressed. In particular, the Assessment Team needs to establish whether the PCB has a stated policy for defined responsibilities and a means to implement each of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065. In carrying out this task, the Assessment Team needs to ensure that the PCB management fully understands the purpose of a management system audit and the importance of a periodic review of the management system to check the effectiveness of the system.

**7.7** In addition to examining the documented management system prepared by the PCB against the relevant cross reference matrices (**F 5.02** and **F 5.03**), the Assessment Team should take the opportunity to discuss the proposed accreditation schedule as per **MAURITAS A13** as well as examine that the evaluation activities undertaken by the PCB meet the requirements of the relevant standard. All nonconformities identified will be recorded on preliminary visit findings form **F 1.20**. The Assessment Team shall not, at any stage of the preliminary visit, provide guidance on how to implement the requirements of the relevant standard.

**7.8** At the end of the preliminary visit, the Assessment Team shall indicate to the PCB whether it can proceed to the initial assessment, or shall provide specific reasons why it cannot proceed. The Assessment Team shall hand over a copy of the preliminary visit findings form, **F 1.20**, to the PCB as well as a copy of the recommendation report, **F 5.06**, which shall indicate:

- a) whether plans for initial assessment of the PCB can proceed, or
- b) specific reasons why plans cannot proceed.

The recommendations should be supported by general and detailed comments. The Assessment Team will not issue to the PCB any detailed checklist or documents that have been used during the course of the preliminary visit.

## **8 The schedule of accreditation**

**8.1** It is the policy of MAURITAS to define the Schedule of a PCB's accreditation as precisely as possible. This ensures that clients are provided with an accurate and unambiguous scope of activities, products covered in the scope, type of scheme, IAF scope, description of the scheme and the relevant standard/specifications for which accreditation is covered. PCBs are therefore asked to specify, in detail, the products they want to be covered in the scope for which accreditation is sought. They are, therefore, required to provide all the relevant information as required in the Application Form, **F 5.01**.

**8.2** The Assessment Team shall consider and discuss with the Case Officer the precise terms in which the accreditation is to be defined on the schedule. This shall be done as early as possible in the accreditation process.

**8.3** For schedules of PCB, every effort will have been made to reach agreement with the PCB on the content of the accreditation schedule prior to the initial assessment. This is important, not only to avoid possible misunderstandings, but also to help the Assessment Team to operate effectively, focusing their attention on those areas of activity detailed on the proposed accreditation schedule.

**8.4** In some cases, as the assessment proceeds, it may become clear that the PCB is not really in a position to achieve accreditation in certain scopes within the originally conceived accreditation schedule. In such cases, the Team Leader, in consultation with the other members of the Assessment Team, may be able to recommend accreditation for a suitably reduced or redefined accreditation schedule.

**8.5** Accreditation schedules are in the public domain and form the basis of MAURITAS List of Accredited Entities published on its website and can also be accessed through the AFRAC and IAF websites.

## 9 Preparation for the initial office assessment visit

**9.1** Based on the recommendations of the Team Leader after the document review or preliminary visit, the PCB has to inform MAURITAS of its readiness to undergo initial assessment. The Case Officer shall carry out the resource review as per **F 1.09**. When preparing for the assessment, the Assessment Team as a whole shall have the required competence, including:

- appropriate knowledge of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065 and the scope of accreditation; and
- understanding sufficient to make a reliable assessment of the competence of the PCB to operate within its scope of accreditation.

Before confirming the composition of the Assessment Team to the PCB management, MAURITAS shall request all the proposed members of the assessment team to declare any former, existing or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves/their parent organisation and the PCB to be assessed by filling the form **F 1.23**. In the event that one or more of the proposed team member declares any interest or link, the Case Officer shall repeat the resource review process with new proposed team members.

**9.2** The PCB shall submit its updated Quality documentation as well as complaints, management review, latest report of internal audit, product certification scheme, a recent list of its certified clients, list of alerts or suspicions of frauds and report(s) of scheme owners performed, if any.

**9.3** The Case Officer shall, in consultation with the approved Assessment Team, prepare an initial assessment plan. This plan shall indicate the activities in the PCB to be assessed by each Assessor. The plan shall also include the relevant clauses of the standard to be covered during the assessment. The plan shall meet the requirements of **MAURITAS A24** and take into consideration the assessment of the scope of activities covered by the schedule of accreditation. The Case Officer shall take into consideration any risks associated with the applicant PCB's activities, location and personnel when developing the assessment plan (e.g. emphasizing focus on high-risk situations when selecting files to be reviewed).

The Case Officer shall ensure that the whole scope applied for accreditation is assessed during the initial assessment.

**9.4** The Case Officer then advises the applicant of the proposed Assessment Team (and the organisation to which they belong), the assessment dates and fees to be charged at least one week prior to the Initial Assessment. New Team Leaders/assessors shall have to be appointed if they are not accepted by the applicant, and actions shall be recommended based on the applicant's valid reasons. However, if the reasons are not considered to be valid and local Team Leaders/Assessors are not available, the PCB shall have to bear the cost of using foreign Team Leaders/assessors.

**9.5** The PCB shall confirm acceptance in writing to the fees and plan before the assessment visit takes place.

**9.6** The Case Officer makes use of the form **F 1.30** for preparation of the assessment packs which are then provided to the Assessment Team.

**9.7** The Assessment Team shall perform the initial assessment as per the assessment plan. The Team Leader shall inform MAURITAS in the event that the assessment team is not able to perform the initial assessment as per the assessment plan and the reasons thereof.

**9.8** The Case Officer will proceed as per the section on 'Witnessing assessment' for the planning and conduct of the witnessing assessment.

## 10 Conduct of Initial Office Assessment visit

**10.1** Prior to the start of the initial assessment, a briefing meeting is carried out by the Team Leader with the Assessment Team (**F 1.15**) to ensure the following:

- All Assessors have received the required documentation
- All Assessors have carried out their respective review prior to the initial assessment; and
- Clarification of any queries.

**10.2** The initial office assessment visit begins with an Opening Meeting, **F 1.01** between the Assessment Team and representatives of the PCB.

**10.3** After the Opening Meeting, the Team Leader, accompanied by the designated staff of the PCB, starts the assessment of management requirements and the respective Assessors proceed with the assessment of the technical requirements. Each Assessor should be accompanied by a member of the PCB staff nominated by the management. An Assessor may be accompanied by several different members of staff in the course of the assessment. Only staff of the organisation will be assessed by MAURITAS. Consultants will not be assessed by MAURITAS and shall not be allowed to participate or interfere in one way or the other during the assessment. They may attend the Opening and Closing meetings as observers.

**10.4** The Assessment Team shall perform file review of clients with certified products or applicants covering their range of activities. The number of files examined could have been specified by the scheme owner.

**10.5** The initial office assessment ends with a Closing Meeting, involving the Assessment Team, PCB representatives and PCB/organisation top management whereby either each member of the Assessment Team presents his findings or the Team Leader summarises the findings of the team and does the presentation. For assessments lasting longer than 1 day, the Assessment Team may also hold an assessors' meeting at the end of each day to compare notes and discuss any changes to the assessment schedule which may have become necessary. An interim Closing Meeting may also be held with the PCB management if some members of the Assessment Team have completed their work or if the assessment lasts longer than 1 day.

## 11 The Opening Meeting

**11.1** The Opening Meeting is held prior to starting the assessment to enable the Assessment Team and the PCB's representatives to become acquainted, to clear up any difficulties and to confirm the purpose of the assessment and what is expected of the PCB during the assessment.

**11.2** The Opening Meeting also ensures that the PCB management and staff understand the processes involved during the assessment. It is chaired by the Team Leader/MS and should cover the agenda according to **F 1.01**.

## 12 Recording failures to comply with MAURITAS requirements

**12.1** The Nonconformity form, **F 5.05** records failure of the PCB to comply with the MAURITAS requirements and provide the objective evidence on which the Assessment Team's recommendations on accreditation to MAURITAS will be based.

**12.2** The Nonconformity form, **F 5.05** must contain only factual observations. These shall be related to nonconformities with specific clauses in **ISO/IEC 17065** and any other requirements specified by MAURITAS. The Assessor/Technical Expert must avoid making provocative or emotive statements in the Report, or using it as an opportunity to lecture the PCB on how to manage its affairs. The assessment team may find it useful, in describing the non-conformity in **F 5.05**, to use a wording identical or similar to the relevant reference in **ISO/IEC 17065** or **MAURITAS R Series** documents. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader to check the wording of all nonconformities and, aided by advice from the Assessment Team, including the MS where appropriate, to allocate formally nonconformities against particular MAURITAS requirements and to categorise them before completing the Recommendation Report, **F 5.06**.

**12.3** Each Nonconformity form, **F 5.05**, shall be completed with the following information, but not limited to, at the time of assessment:

- a) where each non-conformity was made (location/activity);
- b) the product certification scheme;
- c) any documents involved;
- d) a record of the non-conformity (where a particular non-conformity is repeated, this fact should be noted alongside the first non-conformity);
- e) the name(s) of the accompanying representative(s) of the PCB with whom the matter was discussed;
- f) the signatures of the accompanying representative(s) of the PCB and of the respective Assessment Team member;
- g) reference to the specific clause of the standard or MAURITAS Requirements.

**12.4** Subsequently, each non-conformity identified shall be classified as major or minor.

**12.4.1** A major nonconformity shall be allocated for the failure of a system, within the overall management system, to comply with MAURITAS requirements.

Examples of major nonconformities would be:

- the absence of a document-control system;
- the absence of a procedure for internal audit or management review and evidence of implementation;
- auditors not technically competent to perform particular certification activity.

**12.4.2** A minor nonconformity shall be allocated for a less significant failure to comply with MAURITAS requirements that will neither affect the integrity of the management system nor affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results.

Examples of minor nonconformities would be:

- errors in quality records corrected but not initialled;
- a certificate not dated;
- an organisation chart in the quality manual not up-to-date;
- evaluation of external service providers not carried out as scheduled.

**12.5** Classification of nonconformities is done in consultation with the other team members during Assessors' Meeting.

## 13 Summary of findings

**13.1** At the end of the assessment, after the Assessors/Technical Experts have completed their individual assignments, it is essential to hold an Assessors' Meeting at which each team member can summarise his or her own conclusions and contribute to a co-ordinated view of the PCB's work.

**13.2** At this stage, the Team Leader, in conjunction with the Assessment Team, shall review the nonconformities on each **F 5.05** raised during the assessment. In the event that the members of the Assessment Team cannot reach a conclusion with respect to a particular finding, the Team Leader shall refer the matter to MAURITAS (Assistant Accreditation Manager/Accreditation Manager/Director) for clarification before a decision is made.

**13.3** The Recommendation Report **F 5.06** must summarise the Assessment Team's findings, key areas needing corrective action, strengths and weaknesses of the PCB and the recommendation of the Assessment Team to MAURITAS. The recommendation may be for an unconditional offer of accreditation, for an offer to be deferred until the nonconformities have been cleared, or for refusal. In some cases, it may be appropriate for an offer of accreditation to be made for a reduced schedule. The Recommendation Report must make it clear which of these recommendations is being made. MAURITAS accreditation will be granted only after MAURITAS has received any evidence requested and has confirmed, after consultation with the Assessment Team, that all nonconformities have been cleared.

**13.4** The completion of the Recommendation Report is one of the most important duties of the Team Leader. The completed form is a formal record of the team's observations and conclusions and, as such, it must be based on facts and be complete. It must always contain a concise recommendation on the extent to which the PCB complies with the MAURITAS requirements and is competent to carry out the product certification scope of activities for which accreditation has been sought. Being an essentially critical record, it must be carefully prepared to avoid any financial or legal commitments or implications.

**13.5** The Recommendation Report shall be based on the content of the **F 5.02**, **F 5.03** and **F 5.05** forms and shall indicate:

- the recommendation of the Assessment Team on the accreditation of the PCB;
- any areas for improvement;
- the strengths of the PCB;
- the comment of Assessment Team on competence as determined through conformity; and
- the deadline for submission of proposed and implemented corrective actions.

The Recommendation Report should avoid any provocative or emotive statements.

## 14 Factors affecting recommendations on accreditation

**14.1** Where no nonconformities are found, the Assessment Team shall recommend that accreditation be granted for the scope of activities applied.

**14.2** Where nonconformities are found, the recommendation shall be that accreditation be granted subject to submission of root cause analysis, proposed corrective actions and implemented corrective actions for all nonconformities raised and their satisfactory clearance by the Assessment Team. Depending upon the nature of the nonconformities, evidence that the corrective action has been taken shall be provided either by posting or emailing copies of the necessary documents to MAURITAS or through a further on-site visit by an Assessment Team.

**14.3** Where there is one or more scope of activities where major nonconformities have been identified/recorded, but there are no overall significant system failures, the Assessment Team may recommend accreditation for an appropriately reduced schedule.

**14.4** Where the seriousness of the nonconformities found is such that the PCB's management system and organisation is demonstrably inadequate, the Assessment Team shall not recommend accreditation.

## 15 The Closing Meeting

**15.1** The purpose of the Closing Meeting is to enable the Team Leader to inform the PCB management of the recommendations that the Assessment Team will make to MAURITAS. No matter shall be included in the formal presentation of findings that do not appear in the Recommendation Report, **F 5.06**.

**15.2** The Closing Meeting shall be chaired by the Team Leader who should, after referring to the purpose of the visit as explained at the Opening Meeting and shall be as per the agenda **F 1.04**. address the following items, normally in the order listed.

The Team Leader shall specify the deadline for submission of:

- the proposed corrective action to be not more than 1 month as from assessment date for an initial assessment and not more than 1 week as from assessment date for an assessment/re-assessment and extension of scope
- the implemented corrective action to be not more than 3 months as from assessment date for an initial assessment and not more than 1.5 months as from assessment date for an assessment/re-assessment and extension of scope

In the case of long assessments, where one or more assessors have completed their work before the Closing Meeting, the Team Leader should present the findings of any assessor not present. (In such instances, those reports would normally have been the subject of interim Closing Meetings with the PCB management prior to the assessor's departure);

**15.3** The efficient conduct of the closing meeting will leave a lasting impression of the professionalism of the Assessment Team and of the value of the assessment process. It must therefore be conducted with impartiality and with an objective professional approach. The Team Leader should make it clear in his opening remarks that the object of the assessment is to assess the work of the PCB against the MAURITAS criteria and not to score points. Where nonconformities exist, the object is to encourage the PCB to correct them and meet MAURITAS requirements, not to amass enough evidence to justify rejecting the application. It is essential that the Non-Conformity Form **F 5.05** and the Recommendation Report Form **F 5.06** are carefully completed during the assessment to avoid any misunderstandings or difficulties during or after the visit.

**15.4** In presenting the Recommendation Report, the team should not be drawn into debating the validity of their conclusions or the recommendations. If these are questioned, the Team Leader may, however, enumerate the individual nonconformities which justify the recommendations in question and point out the combined effect of the observations on his assessment. If the PCB is still unwilling to accept the recommendations, or contests the overall assessment, the Team Leader shall advise them to take up the matter with MAURITAS. It is important to note that the signing by management of the **F 5.06** is solely an acknowledgement that the report has been presented.

**15.5** The Team Leader shall fill in a Feedback on Assessment Form **F 1.21** at the end of each assessment and submit same to MAURITAS to indicate general aspects of the assessment process.

## 16 Post assessment

**16.1** Within 1 week of the assessment, the Team Leader shall report his recommendations, in confidence, to MAURITAS on Recommendation Report **F 5.06** along with the Feedback report **F 1.21** to the Director.

**16.2** On receipt of proposed corrective actions along with the respective root cause analysis for nonconformities raised during the initial assessment, the Case Officer shall consult with the Assessment Team who will confirm within 1 week, whether the proposed corrective actions are acceptable. If the proposed corrective actions are not acceptable, the Case Officer will act on the Assessment Team's recommendation and request the PCB to submit new proposed corrective actions for the respective nonconformities within 1 week. The Case Officer will inform the PCB when all proposed corrective actions are accepted and request the PCB to submit evidence of implementation of same as per the agreed deadline.

**16.3** On receipt of evidence of implemented corrective action for nonconformities raised during the initial assessment, the Case Officer shall consult with the Assessment Team who will confirm within 1 week, whether the nonconformities have been cleared. If the nonconformities have not been fully cleared, the Case Officer will act on the Assessment Team's recommendation and request the PCB to submit new implemented corrective actions for the respective nonconformities within 1 week. When evidence has been obtained that all nonconformities have been cleared, the Team Leader will finalise and submit an accreditation report to the Secretary of the Accreditation Committee within 1.5 months of clearance of the nonconformities. The accreditation report together with the Director's recommendation for an agreed Schedule of Accreditation for the scope of activities shall then be submitted to the Accreditation Committee for the decision on accreditation. If the recommendation is approved by the Accreditation Committee, the Case Officer will notify the applicant accordingly without undue delay. If the recommendation is not approved by the Accreditation Committee, the Case Officer shall notify the applicant of the reasons and of any further action required. A decision not to grant accreditation, by the Accreditation Committee, can only be based on failure to meet MAURITAS requirements as evidenced through the above documentation.

**16.4** In the event that the PCB does not submit the proposed/implemented Corrective Actions as per agreed deadlines without any justified reason(s), or the PCB continuously submits unsatisfactory proposed and implemented corrective actions, MAURITAS shall not grant accreditation for the relevant scope of activities.

**16.5** When a further visit is required, the Assessor(s) shall assess specifically the clearance of the nonconformities on site. Should some other potential nonconformities be observed during the visit, the Assessor(s) shall bring this to the attention of management of the PCB and report this, in writing, to MAURITAS.

**16.6** Upon grant of accreditation, the Head of the Product Certification Section shall assign a unique accreditation number to the PCB. The Case Officer shall prepare the formal grant of accreditation, the certificate, schedule as per **MAURITAS A13** and contract agreement, **F 1.13**. The Case Officer shall arrange for the relevant signatures and submit them to the PCB within one week of the decision by the Accreditation Committee. On receipt of the signed contract agreement, the Case Officer shall forward a soft copy of the Accreditation symbol to the PCB and shall communicate the tentative assessment dates in the four-year accreditation cycle. The PCB shall also be requested to pay the annual fees.

**16.7** After completion of the assessment, the assessment team destroys/deletes all Quality documentation as well as complaints, management review, internal audit reports, any other documents provided by the PCB e.g the Scheme documentation, list of alerts or suspicions of frauds and report(s) of scheme owners performed prior to the assessment. This is done by all Assessment Team members signing the accreditation report after completion of the assessment.

## **17 Assessment and re-assessment**

**17.1** Following accreditation, PCBs shall be subject to periodic assessment and re-assessment visits. The first assessment visit is carried out six months after the date of accreditation. Subsequent visits are carried out at yearly intervals. The three assessment visits covering all the requirements of **ISO/IEC 17065** are carried out during the accreditation cycle. (**Annex B**)

The Case Officer is responsible for establishing and maintaining an assessment programme for the PCB. The Case Officer shall ensure that the assessment and re-assessment visits are carried out within 1 month of the scheduled date.

**17.2** The purpose of these visits, is to determine whether or not a PCB is continuing to comply with **ISO/IEC 17065**, **MAURITAS R** Series documents, and any other requirements specified by MAURITAS. The general approach described in this publication shall be followed for the conduct of assessment or re-assessment visits. In addition, at the Opening Meeting, the Team Leader/MS shall establish whether all significant changes in the PCB status or operation have been notified to MAURITAS (see **MAURITAS R1**).

**17.3** Before each assessment or re-assessment visit, the Case Officer shall carry out the resource review as per **F 1.09**. Before confirming the composition of the Assessment Team with the PCB, MAURITAS shall request

all the proposed members of the Assessment Team to declare any former, existing or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves/their parent organisation and the PCB to be assessed by filling the Declaration of Impartiality form, **F 1.23**. In the event that one or more of the proposed team member declares any interest or link, the Case Officer shall repeat the resource review process with new proposed team members.

**17.4** The Case Officer then advises the PCB of the proposed Assessment Team (and the organisation to which they belong), the assessment date(s) and fees to be charged at least one week prior to the assessment or re-assessment. New Team Leaders/Assessors shall have to be appointed if they are not accepted by the applicant, and actions shall be initiated based on the applicant's valid reasons. However, if the reasons are not considered to be valid and Team Leaders/Assessors are not available locally, the PCB shall bear the cost of using foreign Team Leaders/Assessors.

The PCB shall inform MAURITAS, in writing, whenever any major changes occur in the contents of the certification scheme for which they have applied for accreditation within 1 month. In the event of major changes to the certification scheme, the PCB will have to provide same for review by MAURITAS prior to the assessment.

**17.5** Before sharing the relevant Quality Documentation of the PCB to the Assessment Team for document review to be carried out prior to the assessment, the Case Officer shall request the team to fill in the Declaration of Confidentiality form **F 1.02** and submit same to MAURITAS.

**17.6** The Assessment Team shall perform the assessments/re-assessments as per the assessment plan. The Team Leader shall inform MAURITAS in the event that the Assessment Team is not able to perform the assessments/re-assessments as per the assessment plan and the reasons thereof.

**17.7** If, during an assessment or a re-assessment visit, it is found that there have been significant changes, e.g. change in key staff, these matters shall be recorded by the Team Leader. The Assessment Team shall check that the changes are not such as to diminish the PCB's capabilities as described in the Schedule of Accreditation, and that they have already been fully notified to MAURITAS as required by **MAURITAS R1**.

**17.8** During a single assessment visit, the Assessment Team will not be expected to check the whole scope of activities for which a PCB is accredited. However, MAURITAS shall ensure that the Assessment Teams assess the complete scope of activities for which the PCB is accredited during the accreditation cycle as detailed in the assessment programme. MAURITAS performs a sampling exercise so that the whole accreditation schedule is assessed during an accreditation cycle and the Case Officer refers to **MAURITAS A24** when planning the assessment such that the Assessment Team assesses the performance of a sample of certification activities representative of the scope of accreditation of the PCB. The sample needs to cover a sample of locations and personnel to determine the competence of the PCB activities in its scope of accreditation for which it has been accredited. In selecting the activities to be assessed the Case Officer shall consider the risk associated with the activities, locations and personnel covered by the scope of accreditation.

MAURITAS will assess key elements of the management system, including but not limited to complaint, management review and internal audit, during each assessment visit.

**17.9** A re-assessment visit will involve a comprehensive re-examination of the PCB's management system and scope of activities and will be similar in format and detail to the initial assessment. The first re-assessment visit will take place three and a half years after the date of accreditation, and thereafter at four-yearly intervals.

**17.10** Prior to each assessment and re-assessment visit, the Case Officer, in consultation with the Head of Product Certification Section, will discuss any required change in the Assessment Team composition with the Director. The Case Officer shall ensure that all accredited scope of activities are assessed during an accreditation cycle. The Case Officer shall take into consideration the risk associated with the activities, locations and personnel covered by the scope of accreditation and refer to **MAURITAS A24** when planning the assessment so that a representative number of locations and personnel are assessed during the re-assessment.

**17.11** The Case Officer shall request, at least two weeks prior to the assessment or re-assessment, the updated Quality documentation, as well as latest management review, internal audit reports and complaints, product certification scheme, list of alerts or suspicions of frauds and report(s) of scheme owners performed, if any, which is to be provided to relevant members of the Assessment Team. The Case Officer shall also forward the latest Accreditation Report relative to the accredited PCB to all the members of the Assessment Team. The Case Officer



shall request the PCB to submit filled cross reference matrices, **F 5.02** and **F5.03**, which shall be provided to the Assessment Team in case of a re-assessment.

**17.12** The Assessment Team may be asked to concentrate on particular areas where there is reason to believe standards have not been maintained, where nonconformities were observed during previous visits, or where there have been significant changes as discussed during the review of the assessment programme

**17.13** The Case Officer makes use of the Checklist for Assessor's pack **F 1.30** for preparation of the assessment packs for the members of the Assessment Team.

**17.14** The Team Leader or the MS forming part the Assessment Team, at the conclusion of an assessment or a re-assessment visit, as with an initial assessment, shall be required to submit an assessment report along with the recommendation to MAURITAS on the continuing accreditation of the PCB, using the same forms as used at the initial assessment. Depending on the seriousness of nonconformities identified, the Assessment Team shall recommend whether accreditation should be:

- a) maintained unconditionally (this recommendation shall be made only when no nonconformities have been identified),
- b) maintained on the understanding that proposed corrective actions are submitted to MAURITAS within a specified time period,
- c) maintained on the understanding that implemented corrective actions are submitted to MAURITAS within a specified time period,
- d) maintained but for a reduced Schedule of Accreditation,
- e) suspended until the PCB has corrected the nonconformities identified within a specified time period (usually not more than 4 months), or

NOTE: A recommendation that the accreditation of a PCB is suspended will almost certainly require a further visit to confirm that the nonconformities have been cleared.

- f) withdrawn/terminated.

**17.15** Suspension or withdrawal/termination of accreditation shall only be recommended where the seriousness of the nonconformities found is such that the PCB's management system has broken down, and MAURITAS requirements can no longer be met.

**17.16** In the event that the PCB does not submit the proposed/implemented corrective actions as per agreed deadlines without any justified reason(s) or the PCB continuously submits unsatisfactory proposed and implemented corrective actions, MAURITAS shall proceed with the suspension or reduction of scope of the PCB or withdrawal/termination.

**17.17** On receipt of proposed corrective actions along with the respective root cause analysis for nonconformities raised during the assessments/re-assessments, the Case Officer shall consult with the Assessment Team who will confirm within 1 week, whether the proposed corrective actions are acceptable. If the proposed corrective actions are not acceptable, the Case Officer will act on the Assessment Team's recommendation and request the PCB to submit new proposed corrective actions for the respective nonconformities within 1 week. The Case Officer will inform the PCB when all proposed corrective actions are accepted and request the PCB to submit evidence of implementation of same as per the agreed deadline.

**17.18** On receipt of evidence of corrective action for nonconformities raised during the assessments/re-assessments, the Case Officer shall consult with the Assessment Team who will confirm within 1 week, whether the nonconformities have been cleared. If the nonconformities have not been cleared, the Case Officer will act on the Assessment Team's recommendation and request the PCB to submit new implemented corrective actions for the respective nonconformities within 1 week.

**17.19** On receipt of the confirmation by the Assessment Team that all nonconformities have been cleared, the Team Leader will finalise and submit an accreditation report to the Secretary of the Accreditation Committee.

The accreditation report together with the Director's recommendation shall then be submitted to the MAURITAS Accreditation Committee for the decision on accreditation. The Case Officer shall inform the PCB of the decision of the Accreditation Committee within one week.

**17.20** When the maintenance of accreditation is not related to a re-assessment and there is no modification to the scope, the decision may be taken by the Director, except in the following cases:

- the scope of accreditation contains one product certification scheme with more than 3 different products;
- the scope of accreditation contains more than 2 product certification schemes;
- the number of nonconformities, in particular, major ones is consequent; and
- the risks associated with the PCB's activities, location and personnel is considerable.

**17.21** Applications for major changes to a PCB's Schedule of Accreditation involving extension to new scope of activities within the same scope of accreditation or an additional scope shall be submitted to MAURITAS at least 3 months before the next visit in order for the assessment to be arranged, including the appointment of new Team Leaders/Assessors/ Technical Experts as necessary. Such applications shall be made on the relevant application form and accompanied by the associated documentation and fees.

**17.22** At each re-assessment, the Director and the Head of PCB Section shall consider the accredited PCB's current Schedule of Accreditation and review the composition of the Assessment Team in advance of the visit. The PCB Section shall review the current assessment programme to identify any trends. Following the re-assessment visit, which will follow the same general procedure as the initial assessment, and the receipt of evidence of clearance of nonconformities, the accreditation report and recommendation will be submitted by the Director for consideration and a decision by the Accreditation Committee, for renewal of accreditation for a further four-year period.

**17.23** When a decision is taken for renewal of a PCB's accreditation, it shall be ensured that there are no laps/discontinuation in the accreditation cycle and therefore, the following shall be applicable:

- In the event that the process is completed before the expiry date, the renewal of accreditation shall be effective on a date right after the expiry.
- In case the process is not yet completed before the expiry date:
  - MAURITAS shall suspend the PCB for a maximum period of 4 months in case the delay for renewal is attributable to the PCB. The re-instatement/renewal shall be effective on the date right after the expiry;
  - The Accreditation Committee shall extend the validity of the accreditation for a maximum period of three months in case the delay for renewing is attributable to MAURITAS. The re-instatement/renewal of accreditation shall be effective on the date right after the expiry.

**17.24** If there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour, if the accredited PCB intentionally provides false information or if the accredited PCB conceals information or if fraudulent practice is observed during an assessment, MAURITAS shall take necessary actions for withdrawal of accreditation and shall consider communicating same to relevant authorities and/or scheme owners.

## 18 Witnessing Assessment

**18.1** The objective of a witnessing assessment is to establish, by observation, whether the work of the PCB is being carried out in accordance with **ISO/IEC 17065**, scheme requirements, relevant **MAURITAS R Series** documents, any other requirements specified by MAURITAS, and the PCB's management system.

A witnessing assessment includes assessment of inspection operations and evaluation of management systems if the certification body is not accredited according to ISO/IEC 17020 (Factory Production Control), or monitoring testing activities if not accredited according to ISO/IEC 17025.

**18.2** IAF scopes as per IAF ID 1 are used to classify the scope of activities for product certification. There are 2 situations to be considered when planning for witnessing for an assessment/re-assessment:

- One product certification scheme with different products i.e. if a single scheme covers various products which can be classified based on IAF scopes then the scopes with high complexity and associated risk will be witnessed to ensure competence before grant of accreditation.
- If a PCB has applied for more than one product certification scheme, then MAURITAS would witness at least one audit per scheme, based on the associated complexity and risk of activity.

**18.3** The number of witnessing audits to be carried out for an initial assessment/assessment/re-assessment and the number of personnel to be witnessed shall be based on **MAURITAS A24**.

**18.4** The Case Officer requests an updated list of certified companies for product certification on an annual basis in order to be able to plan for the witnessing audits to be carried out during the accreditation cycle of the PCB. The list comprises certified companies in the respective IAF scopes, product categories, relevant scheme, type of scheme, complexity and level of risks.

The Case Officer shall take into consideration any risks associated with the applicant PCB's activities, location and personnel when selecting which client to witness during witness assessment.

The Case Officer shall also request for an updated list of auditors and inspectors in the respective area of competency for the accredited scopes.

**18.5** At least two weeks before an assessment, the Case Officer shall carry out the resource review as per **F 1.09** and ensure that the Assessment Team, Team Leader and Assessor or MS along with a Technical Expert, as a whole shall have the required competence.

Before confirming the composition of the Assessment Team to the PCB management, MAURITAS shall request all the proposed members of the assessment team to declare any former, existing or envisaged link or competitive position between themselves/their parent organisation and the PCB to be assessed by filling the form **F 1.23**. In the event that one or more of the proposed team member declares any interest or link, the Case Officer shall repeat the resource review process with new proposed team members.

**18.6** The PCB shall submit a copy of its evaluation plan, evaluation team competence records or background of inspectors or auditors in case the CAB is not accredited according to ISO/IEC 17020 and ISO/IEC 17025 and previous inspection/audit report (if any).

**18.7** The Case Officer shall take into consideration any risks associated with the PCB's activities, location and personnel when developing the assessment plan. The assessment pack comprising the assessment plan, product certification scheme along with the documents submitted by the PCB shall be provided to the Assessment Team at least one week before the assessment.

**18.8** The Case Officer then advises the PCB of the proposed Assessment Team (and the organisation to which they belong), the assessment dates and fees to be charged at least one week prior to the assessment. New Team Leaders/assessors shall have to be appointed if they are not accepted by the PCB, and actions shall be recommended based on the PCB's valid reasons. However, if the reasons are not considered to be valid and local Team Leaders/assessors are not available, the PCB shall have to bear the cost of using foreign Team Leaders/assessors.

**18.9** The PCB shall confirm acceptance in writing to the fees and plan before the witnessing assessment takes place.

**18.10** The Case Officer makes use of the form **F 1.30** for preparation of the assessment packs which are then provided to the Assessment Team for the witnessing assessment.

**18.11** During the witnessing assessment, the Assessment Team will act as observers while recording their observations and a debriefing with the PCB shall only be carried out at the end of the closing meeting of the PCB with its client.

**18.12** Any nonconformities identified shall be recorded in form **F5.05** and shall be based on objective evidence. In order to avoid subsequent dispute, the assessment team shall record the nonconformities, as they occur and

must be agreed upon before leaving the area under assessment. Each nonconformity shall be acknowledged by the accompanying PCB representative(s).

**18.13** The Assessment Team should restrict their assessment to the PCB's compliance with MAURITAS requirements and to the scope of activities for which accreditation is sought. The Assessment Team shall have a positive attitude during assessment.

**18.14** Each member of the Assessment Team shall prepare a witnessing report, **F 5.07**, and submit same to the Case Officer within 1 month of the assessment date and same to be forwarded to the PCB.

## 19 Extension of scope of accreditation

**19.1** A PCB shall notify MAURITAS of its request to conduct scope extension assessment together with the assessment minimum 3 months before the date of assessment.

**19.2** When a PCB applies for an extension of scope of Accreditation for a new product/process or a new scheme, MAURITAS shall carry out an on-site assessment to ascertain whether the PCB is technically competent to carry out the extension applied for. The extension of scope shall be performed by a combination of office and witnessing assessments. The documentation to be requested by the Case Officer from the PCB shall be the same as for an initial assessment.

**19.3** If the extension is assessed during a scheduled visit, it shall not be allowed to reduce the effectiveness and coverage of the normal office assessment/re-assessment.

**19.4** If the extension is performed independently from a scheduled office assessment/re-assessment, the assessment is planned and performed as per relevant clauses of sections 'Preparation for the initial assessment' and 'Assessment and Re-assessment' with the exception that the Assessment Team may comprise an MS instead of a Team Leader.

**19.5** Decisions with respect to extension of scope are done as described in section 'Post Assessment'

**19.6** The PCBs shall be required to follow the timelines as defined in **Annex C**.

## 20 Duration of assessments

**20.1** The durations of PCB assessments are normally as per the table below:

| Type of Assessment | Number of Assessors                                       | Number of days    | Remarks   |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Preliminary visit  | 1 Team Leader + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS | 1                 |   |
| Initial Assessment | 1 Team Leader + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS | Minimum of 2 days | The duration of the Initial Assessment will depend on the scope of activities for which accreditation has been applied for and will be determined after consultation with the Head of Section/Director and the members of the Assessment Team |
| Assessments        | 1 Team Leader + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS | Minimum of 1 day  | The duration of the Assessment will depend on the sample of the accredited scope to be covered as per <b>MAURITAS A24</b> and will be determined after consultation with the Head of  |

|                        |   |                    |  |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|--|
|                        |   |                    | Section/Director and the members of the Assessment Team.   |
| Re-Assessment          | 1 Team Leader + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS       | Minimum of 2 days  | The duration of the Re-Assessment will depend on the sample of the accredited scope to be covered as per <b>MAURITAS A24</b> and will be determined after consultation with the Head of Section/Director and the members of the Assessment Team. |
| Extension of scope     | 1 Team Leader or MS + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS | Minimum of 0.5 day | The duration of the Extension of scope will depend on the scope for which extension of scope has been applied for and will be determined after consultation with the Head of Section/Director and the members of the Assessment Team             |
| Witnessing Assessments | 1 Team Leader + at least 1 Assessor/Technical Expert + MS       | Minimum of 1 day   | The number of witnessing audits to be carried out for an assessment/re-assessment and the number of personnel to be witnessed shall be based on <b>MAURITAS A24</b>  |

**20.2** The factors influencing the duration of assessments and the composition of MAURITAS Assessment Teams are:

- the number of scope of activities, products, scheme and type of scheme for which the PCB has applied or is accredited; or
- the sample of the accredited scope to be assessed as determined by **MAURITAS A24**; and
- the risks associated with the accredited PCB's activities, location and personnel.

## 21 Remarks

**21.1** The problems encountered in assessment will be many and varied, and this publication can only provide general guidance. It will always remain the duty of the individual Assessor/Technical Expert to weigh all the evidence available before making a judgement on a particular situation in a PCB. The Assessment Team should always bear in mind the need for tact, courtesy and objectivity. They should be open-minded and prepared to accept novel solutions to age-old problems, if they can be shown to be valid.

## 22 Related Forms

- Agenda Opening Meeting **F 1.01**
- Declaration of Confidentiality **F 1.02**
- Attendance Sheet **F1.03** Agenda Closing Meeting **F 1.04**
- Briefing meeting with Assessors/ Technical Experts **F 1.15**
- Preliminary Visit Findings Form **F 1.20**
- Feedback from assessment **F 1.21**
- Declaration of Impartiality **F 1.23**
- Checklist for Assessor's pack ISO/IEC 17065 **F 1.30**
- Team Leader / Assessor / Technical Expert Monitoring Checklist **F 1.31**
- ISO/IEC 17065 cross reference matrix-cum- document review report for Management requirement **F 5.02**
- ISO/IEC 17065 cross reference matrix-cum- document review report for Technical requirement **F 5.03**
- Report from Document Review ISO/IEC 17065 **F 5.04**
- Nonconformity report ISO/IEC 17065 **F 5.05**
- Recommendation Report for ISO/IEC 17065 **F 5.06**
- Witnessing Assessment Report for Product Certification **F 5.07**

**Appendix A: Amendment Table**

| SN | Section | Amendment |
|----|---------|-----------|
|    |         |           |
|    |         |           |

## Annex A: Timeline for accreditation process of an applicant PCB

| Step No. | Activity  | Minimum Duration                                   | Cumulative No. of Days |
|----------|---|--|------------------------|
| 1        | <b>Application submission</b><br>(F 5.01, F 5.02, F 5.03, F 5.08, Quality Docs, Fees)               | Day 1  | <b>Day 1</b>           |
| 2        | <b>Application review</b><br>(completeness, eligibility, scheme suitability)                        | 7 days   | <b>Day 8</b>           |
| 3        | <b>Resource Review</b>  | 7 days   | <b>Day 15</b>          |
| 4        | <b>Conflict of interest declarations</b> (F 1.23)<br><b>Declaration of Confidentiality</b> (F 1.02) | 3 days   | <b>Day 18</b>          |
| 5        | <b>Document review by Assessment Team</b>   | Max 3 months                                       | <b>Day 108</b>         |
| 6        | <b>Preliminary Visit</b> (optional)<br><b>Planning and conduct of visit</b>                         | 2 weeks planning +<br>1 day visit                  | <b>Day 123</b>         |
| 7        | <b>PCB confirms readiness for initial assessment</b>  | Within 1 month                                     | <b>Day 153</b>         |
| 8        | <b>Initial Office Assessment planned and performed</b>  | 2 weeks planning +<br>Minimum 2 days<br>assessment | <b>Day 167</b>         |
| 9        | <b>PCB submits corrective actions</b><br>(proposed + root cause)                                    | Within 1 month                                     | <b>Day 197</b>         |
| 10       | <b>Review of proposed CAs</b>   | Within 1 week                                      | <b>Day 204</b>         |
| 11       | <b>PCB submits evidence of implemented CAs</b>  | Within 3 months<br>from assessment                 | <b>Day 257</b>         |
| 12       | <b>Clearance of Nonconformities</b>   | Within 1 week                                      | <b>Day 264</b>         |
| 13       | <b>Accreditation Report &amp; Decision</b> (Accreditation Committee)                                | Within 1.5 months<br>after clearance               | <b>Day 309</b>         |
| 14       | <b>Provide PCB with certificate &amp; schedule issued</b>   | Within 1 week                                      | <b>Day 316</b>         |

## Annex B: Timeline for accreditation process of an accredited PCB

| Step No. | Activity   | Minimum Duration                  | Cumulative No. of Days |
|----------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1        | Schedule assessment/re-assessment visit  | Day 1                             | Day 1                  |
| 2        | Resource review by Case Officer (Form F 1.09)  | 7 days                            | Day 8                  |
| 3        | Conflict of interest declarations by assessment team (Form F 1.23)<br>Declaration of Confidentiality (F 1.02)                  | 3 days                            | Day 11                 |
| 4        | Case Officer shares updated documents to assessment team (Quality manual, Management Review, Internal Audit, Complaints, etc.) | Within 2 weeks before assessment  | Day 25                 |
| 5        | Conduct of assessment/re-assessment (minimum 1 day for assessment and 2 days for re-assessment)                                | 2 days                            | Day 27                 |
| 7        | PCB submits proposed corrective actions with root cause analysis   | Within 1 week                     | Day 34                 |
| 8        | Review of proposed CAs   | Within 1 week                     | Day 41                 |
| 9        | PCB submits implemented corrective actions   | Within 1.5 months of assessment   | Day 69                 |
| 10       | Clearance of Nonconformities   | Within 1 week                     | Day 76                 |
| 11       | Accreditation Report & Decision (Accreditation Committee)  | Within 1.5 months after clearance | Day 118                |
| 12       | Provide PCB with certificate & schedule issued (where applicable)  | Within 1 week                     | Day 125                |



## Annex C: Timeline for accreditation process for Extension of Scope of PCB

| Step No. | Activity  | Minimum Duration                  | Cumulative No. of Days |
|----------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1        | PCB submits request for extension of scope (incl. forms & fees)   | Day 1                             | Day 1                  |
| 2        | Review of application (completeness, scheme suitability)  | 7 days                            | Day 8                  |
| 3        | Resource review (form F 1.09)   | 7 days                            | Day 15                 |
| 4        | Conflict of interest declarations from assessors (form F 1.23)<br>Declaration of Confidentiality (F 1.02) | 3 days                            | Day 18                 |
| 5        | Document review by Assessment Team  | Max 3 months (90 days)            | Day 108                |
| 6        | On-site office assessment   | 2 weeks planning + 0.5–1 day      | Day 123                |
| 7        | PCB submits proposed corrective actions   | Within 1 week                     | Day 130                |
| 8        | Review of proposed CAs  | Within 1 week                     | Day 137                |
| 9        | PCB submits implemented corrective actions  | Within 1.5 months of assessment   | Day 165                |
| 10       | Clearance of Nonconformities  | Within 1 week                     | Day 172                |
| 11       | Accreditation Report & Decision (Accreditation Committee)   | Within 1.5 months after clearance | Day 214                |
| 12       | Provide PCB with certificate & schedule issued  | Within 1 week                     | Day 221                |