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# MAURITAS

# A14

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## **Procedure for suspension, reduction and withdrawal of accreditation**

**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 suspension, reduction and withdrawal of accreditation

## 1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline steps to be followed in situations or scenarios which can lead to suspension, reduction or withdrawal of accreditation of a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB).

## 2 Scope and Responsibilities

2.1 This document applies to all accredited CABs and is to be implemented by relevant accreditation decision makers of MAURITAS.

2.2 The Director shall be responsible for handling all suspension, reduction or withdrawal of accreditation.

## 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 **Mauritius Accreditation Service Act (Act 23 of 1998 - 1 August 1999 amended 10/17 (cio 24/7/17))**

3.2 **MAURITAS A Series documents**

3.3 **MAURITAS P Series documents**

3.4 **MAURITAS R Series documents**

## 4 Definition

### 4.1 Accreditation

A third-party attestation related to a CAB conveying formal demonstration of its competence, impartiality and consistent operation in performing specific audit and certification activities.

### 4.2 Suspension

Suspension is the action of putting temporary restrictions in place for all or part of the scope of accreditation.

### 4.3 Reduction

Reduction is the action of cancelling part of the scope of accreditation.

### 4.4 **Withdrawal (also referred to as 'Termination' in MAURITAS Act 1998 - 1 August 1999 amended 10/17 (cio 24/7/17)):**

Withdrawal is the cancelling of accreditation for the full scope.

### 4.5 Appeal

Appeal is the request by a CAB for reconsideration of any adverse accreditation decision related to its desired accreditation status.

## 5 Suspension of accreditation by MAURITAS

**5.1** MAURITAS may suspend the accreditation of CABs or part of it based on the following but not limited to:

- Lack of implementation of the management system;
- Changes in the key personnel;
- Lack of competence of personnel;
- Shortcoming in performing corrective actions within the time limit;
- Continuous submission of unsatisfactory proposed/implemented corrective actions;
- Unacceptable conformity assessment practice;
- Conformity assessment activities in fields where the organisation has no personnel with satisfactory competence;
- Changes in the organisation;
- CAB does not pay its fees after a period of 6 months from date of issue of invoice;
- Failure of CAB to take satisfactory corrective actions in a timely manner for renewing accreditation prior to expiry date.

**5.2** When a CAB is found to have nonconformities of such magnitude that they threaten the quality of work, but MAURITAS Assessment Team is satisfied that the management of the CAB has the resources and commitment to complete corrective action within the agreed time frame, the Director may suspend accreditation or part of accreditation of the CAB for a specific period of time. For example, if the CAB fails to complete corrective actions within an additional period of 4 weeks, in addition to time taken to submit implemented corrective actions (1.5 months for laboratories and 2 months for certification bodies).

**5.3** In accordance with sub-section 11(2) of the Act, the Director may take decisions on the suspension of accreditation if specified fees are not paid by accredited bodies.

**5.4** The Director shall then inform the CAB that the accreditation or part of it has been suspended, the reason, duration and date of the suspension and the right of the CAB to appeal against the suspension.

**5.5** Should an appeal be received it shall be processed according to the procedure described in MAURITAS P2.

### 5.6 Partial / Full Suspension of Laboratories and Inspection Bodies

#### 5.6.1 Partial Suspension

In the event of a partial suspension of accreditation, MAURITAS does not recall the accreditation certificate and schedule. However, the laboratory / inspection body can still use the MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark on its test reports, calibration certificates inspection reports or other documents and represent itself as being endorsed by MAURITAS for parameters which have not been suspended.

Parameters which are under suspension shall be reported as non-accredited during suspension period.

#### 5.6.2 Full Suspension

In the event of a full suspension of accreditation, MAURITAS does not recall the accreditation certificate and schedule. The laboratory / inspection body shall not be allowed to use the MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark on its test reports, calibration certificates, inspection reports or other documents nor represent itself as being endorsed by MAURITAS in any way.

### 5.7 Partial / Full Suspension of Certification Bodies

In the event of a partial or full suspension of the scope of accreditation for a certification body, MAURITAS does not recall the accreditation certificate and schedule.

The accredited Certification Body shall not be allowed to extend or renew its accredited certificates with the MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark during the suspension period nor represent itself as being endorsed by MAURITAS in any way for the scopes under suspension. The accredited Certification Body shall also not offer to its clients non-accredited certification within its accredited scope.

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The accredited Certification Body can however still continue to carry out its planned surveillance activities in accordance with the requirements of its certification programme in order to honour its existing certification contracts.

**5.8** Since suspension is public information, same shall be promulgated by MAURITAS on its Register and web-site and in all other ways considered appropriate at the time. The suspended CAB is required to pay the fees that is due.

**5.9** MAURITAS shall suspend the CAB for a maximum period of four months in case the delay for renewal is attributable to the CAB. The re-instatement/renewal shall be effective on the date right after the expiry.

**5.10** Following a suspension, MAURITAS shall perform an assessment activity, if necessary, before recommending the re-instatement of accreditation of the CAB. The extent of the assessment shall depend on the cause of the suspension of the CAB.

**5.11** The Accreditation Committee may reinstate accreditation or part of the accreditation of the CAB following a further assessment by MAURITAS whereby the assessment team shall verify whether all requirements of accreditation are being met with evidence of completed corrective action. In cases where an assessment is not required for re-instating the accreditation of the CAB, for example in the case of suspension due all fees payable have not been settled, the decision will be taken by the Director.

**5.12** Failure to complete corrective action by the agreed deadline during the suspension period, might lead to the withdrawal of the accreditation of the CAB as described in section on 'Withdrawal of accreditation' of this document.'

**5.13** Where a CAB is providing third-party conformity assessment to IAF MLA or ILAC MRA Level 1 to 4 standards used as a basis for accrediting CABs (e.g. ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020, ISO 15189) as per established procedure, MAURITAS shall terminate the CAB's application process or initiate its process for suspension of accreditation (as applicable). Further decisions by MAURITAS shall be based on the actions taken by the CAB.

## **6 Voluntary suspension of accreditation**

**6.1** An accredited CAB may request for voluntary suspension of its scope of accreditation or part of its scope of accreditation if it has valid reasons to believe that for a period of time not exceeding 6 months, it will not be able to satisfy the accreditation requirements such as moving of premises, equipment, change of key personnel. The request shall be made to the Director in writing.

**6.2** The Case Officer shall then assess the reasons provided by the CAB and submit recommendation to the Director for evaluation and approval.

### **6.3 Voluntary Partial / Full Suspension of Laboratories and Inspection Bodies:**

#### **6.3.1 Partial Voluntary Suspension**

In the event of a voluntary suspension of part of the scope of accreditation, the request will be processed by MAURITAS and upon approval by the Director, the laboratory / inspection body shall then be informed accordingly, through a letter, to cease any use of MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark and any implication of having an association with MAURITAS during the period of suspension, only for those parameters for which it has requested suspension.

The laboratory / inspection body can still continue to use the MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark for parameters not under suspension. Parameters which are under voluntary suspension shall be reported as non-accredited during suspension period. The letter shall also mention that Accreditation Certificates and schedules need not be returned to MAURITAS.

### **6.3.2 Full Voluntary Suspension**

In the event of a voluntary suspension of the whole scope of accreditation, the request will be processed by MAURITAS and upon approval by the Director, the laboratory / inspection body shall then be informed accordingly, through a letter, to cease any use of MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark and any implication of having an association with MAURITAS during the period of suspension, for all accredited parameters. The letter shall also mention that accreditation certificates and schedules need not be returned to MAURITAS.

### **6.4 Voluntary Partial / Full Suspension of Certification Bodies:**

In the event of a voluntary partial or full suspension of the scope of accreditation for a Certification Body, the request will be processed by MAURITAS and upon approval by the Director, the Certification Body shall then be informed accordingly. MAURITAS does not recall the accreditation certificate and schedule. The accredited Certification Body shall not be allowed to extend or renew its accredited certificates with the MAURITAS accreditation symbol / Combined Mark during the voluntary suspension period nor represent itself as being endorsed by MAURITAS in any way for the scopes under suspension. The accredited Certification Body shall also not offer to its clients non-accredited certification within its accredited scope.

The accredited Certification Body can however still continue to carry out its planned surveillance activities in accordance with the requirements of its certification programme in order to honour its existing certification contracts.

**6.5** It is the duty of the CAB to inform MAURITAS when it is ready for an assessment exercise. Should the CAB not inform MAURITAS during the specified period, a letter of reminder shall be issued by the Case Officer. In case the CAB is not able to meet specified deadlines, the accreditation of the CAB shall be withdrawn.

**6.6** MAURITAS shall make publicly available information about the voluntary suspension of the CAB.

**6.7** By reinstatement of accreditation after voluntary suspension, the Case Officer shall inform the CAB about its right to use the MAURITAS symbol / Combined Mark according to MAURITAS R4 document. MAURITAS will also make publicly available the information on the re-instatement of accreditation of the CAB

## **7 Reduction / withdrawal of accreditation by MAURITAS**

**7.1** When a suspended CAB fails to complete satisfactory corrective action by the deadline of the suspension period or when a CAB is shown to be incapable of meeting conditions for MAURITAS accreditation, the accreditation shall be reduced or withdrawn by MAURITAS.

**7.2** MAURITAS reserves the right to be able to make publicly available information about the withdrawal or reduction of accreditation of a CAB and same shall be promulgated by MAURITAS on its Register and web-site and in all other ways considered appropriate at the time. In the case of withdrawal, MAURITAS shall remove all reference to the CAB from shall and shall end any applicable obligations it has to the CAB. No refund of subscription is made to the CAB.

**7.3** The process of reduction/withdrawal by MAURITAS requires preparation of a report for the Accreditation Committee which shall then decide on the issue, following the steps listed in **MAURITAS A8, A9, A18 and A30** documents.

**7.4** The Director shall then inform the CAB that the accreditation has been reduced/withdrawn, the date and reason of reduction/withdrawal and the right of the CAB to appeal against the decision.

**7.5** The CAB shall be required:

- to return its accreditation certificate and schedule, where applicable;
- to immediately cease the use of the MAURITAS symbol / Combined Mark for the accreditation withdrawn / reduced; and
- not to associate itself with MAURITAS for the accreditation withdrawn / reduced.

**7.6** In case of reduction of accreditation, MAURITAS shall also re-issue an updated schedule of accreditation.

**7.7** The CAB shall inform its clients that are affected by the withdrawal or reduction that it is no longer accredited or part of its schedule is no longer accredited and that a copy of this information shall be forwarded to MAURITAS (For example, Certification Bodies must ensure that their clients are no longer using the MAURITAS accreditation symbol).

**7.8** Where there is evidence of fraudulent behaviour, or the CAB intentionally provides false information or conceals information, or, in addition, if the CAB deliberately violates accreditation rules, as per established procedure, MAURITAS shall initiate its process for withdrawal of accreditation.

**7.9** When a CAB decides not to transit to an updated accreditation standard, the accreditation shall automatically be withdrawn at the end of the transition period.

## **8 Voluntary reduction / withdrawal of accreditation**

**8.1** Since accreditation is voluntary, a CAB is also free to voluntarily reduce or withdraw its scope of accreditation at any time.

**8.2** Moreover, CABs that have been found to have non-compliances of such a magnitude as to require suspension or withdrawal may choose to voluntarily reduce their schedule or withdraw accreditation. Although the fact of voluntary withdrawal is public knowledge, the reasons behind it are not and hence the CAB may suffer less loss of prestige in this way.

**8.3** Request for voluntary reduction / withdrawal of accreditation shall be made by the CAB in writing to the Director and the request is processed by MAURITAS. Voluntary reduction of schedule of accreditation or withdrawal are purely administrative procedures requiring no decision by the Accreditation Committee. The Director shall then inform the CAB that the accreditation has been reduced or withdrawn as appropriate and the date of reduction or withdrawal.

**8.4** MAURITAS reserves the right to be able to make publicly available information about the withdrawal or reduction of accreditation of a CAB and same shall be promulgated by MAURITAS on its Register and web-site and in all other ways considered appropriate at the time. In the case of withdrawal, MAURITAS shall remove all reference to the CAB from its website and shall end any applicable obligations it has to the CAB. No refund of subscription is made to the CAB.

**8.5** The CAB shall be required:

- to return its accreditation certificate and schedule, where applicable;
- to immediately cease the use of the MAURITAS symbol / Combined Mark, where relevant, for the accreditation withdrawn / reduced; and
- not to associate itself with MAURITAS for the accreditation withdrawn/reduced.

**8.6** In case of reduction of schedule, MAURITAS shall also re-issue an updated schedule of accreditation. CABs shall not use the MAURITAS accreditation symbol/Combined Mark, where relevant, on reports implying that it holds accreditation for those tests/calibrations activities which have been removed from the schedule.

**8.7** The CAB shall inform its clients that are affected by the withdrawal or reduction that it is no longer accredited or part of its schedule is no longer accredited and that a copy of this information shall be forwarded to MAURITAS (for example, Certification Bodies must ensure that their clients are no longer using the MAURITAS accreditation symbol).

## **9 Related Forms**

**Appendix A: Amendment Table**

SN	Section	Amendment