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# MAURITAS P1

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## MAURITAS Accreditation Committee – Rules of procedure

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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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# MAURITAS Accreditation Committee - Rules of procedure

## 1. Purpose

1.1 This procedure sets the rules for Accreditation Committee for decision making.

## 2. Scope and Responsibilities

2.1 The MAURITAS Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the AC) is authorised under The Mauritius Accreditation Service Act 1998 to take decisions on accreditation under the Act. The AC is authorised to make decisions on the granting, maintaining, extending, reducing and withdrawal of accreditation.

It is the responsibility of the Members and Secretary to follow all the provisions of the procedure when carrying out AC meetings.

## 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. | MAURITAS A8   | : | Procedure for assessment – Laboratories  |
| 3.2. | MAURITAS A9   | : | Procedure for assessment – Certification bodies  |
| 3.3. | MAURITAS A18  | : | Procedure for assessment of accredited certification bodies  |
| 3.4. | MAURITAS A19  | : | Extension of accreditation in field of activities regarding system certification                       |
| 3.5. | MAURITAS A23  | : | Procedure for extraordinary visit  |
| 3.6. | MAURITAS A27  | : | <b>Procedure for Remote Assessment</b>   |
| 3.7. | ISO/IEC 17011 | : | Conformity assessment – Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies |

## 4. Definitions

### 4.1 Granting

Granting is the action of awarding accreditation for a defined scope of accreditation

### 4.2 Maintaining

Maintaining accreditation is the action of confirming the continuance of accreditation for a defined scope of accreditation

### 4.3 Extending accreditation

Extending accreditation is the action of adding conformity assessment activities to the scope of accreditation

#### **4.4 Suspension**

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

#### **4.5 Reduction**

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

#### **4.6 Withdrawal (also referred to as 'Termination' in MAURITAS Act 1998):**

Withdrawal is the cancelling of accreditation for the full scope.

#### **4.7 Appeal**

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

#### **4.8 Extraordinary event**

An Extraordinary visit is an additional visit, initially not planned, carried out in order to ensure implementation and compliance of accreditation criteria.

#### **4.9 Conformity Assessment Body**

A body that performs conformity assessment activities and that can be the object of accreditation. It applies to both applicant and accredited bodies.

## **5. Constitution**

**5.1** Members of the AC are defined under sub-section 8(1) of the Act and paragraph 32 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act No.10 of 2017.

**5.2** The current composition of AC comprises:

- (a) a Chairperson, appointed by the Minister;
- (b) the Director of MAURITAS; and
- (c) a representative from the Ministry responsible for the subject of Industrial Development;
- (d) 2 members having a scientific or technical background, appointed by the Minister.

The AC shall, as and when required under sub-section 8(2) of the Act, co-opt one or two persons with expertise relevant to the type of conformity assessment body being considered.

**5.3** No substitutes for the permanent members shall be allowed in the AC.

## **6. Quorum**

**6.1** The AC has a quorum when at least 3 of its members are present.

**6.2** In the absence of the Chairperson, the committee will elect 1 of its members, except the representative of the Ministry of Industrial Development, to act as the Chairperson for that meeting.

**6.3** In the absence of the Director of MAURITAS, the person assigned with the duties of the Director will attend the Accreditation Committee meeting.

## **7. Operation**

**7.1** The AC shall conduct its operations in accordance with the policies and procedures laid down in the MAURITAS Quality Manual and associated procedures in respect of assessment and accreditation decisions and in accordance with the Act.

## **8. Decisions**

### **8.1** The AC shall:

- Verify that the assessment process has been performed in accordance with the MAURITAS requirements and that it has been conducted in an impartial manner;
- Verify that objective evidence is available to support the recommendation from the assessment team;
- Approve the recommendation of the assessment team made in the light of the above evidence.

**8.2** The AC shall attempt to reach decisions by consensus after reviewing the submitted accreditation report and relevant documentation during meetings convened for the purpose in accordance with Clause 7 of this procedure. In the event this is not possible, the AC shall proceed by voting taking into consideration that there is a balanced representation during the voting exercise. All members and co-opted members are eligible for voting and in case of a tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

**8.3** In the case of a decision which is contrary to the recommendation of the Assessment Team, it shall be supported by a clear statement of the reason for the decision which shall be based only on the information provided to the AC. This statement identifying the applicable clause or clauses of the MAURITAS criteria or Regulations, shall be prepared, signed by the Chairperson and members at the meeting.

**8.4** When decisions are taken for renewal of a CAB, 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 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;
  - The Accreditation Committee shall extend the validity of the accreditation for a maximum period of three months in case the delay for renewal is attributable to MAURITAS. The re-instatement/renewal of accreditation 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 six months in case the delay for renewal is attributable to an extraordinary event.

**8.5** The Accreditation Committee has delegated the power to take decision on maintenance of accreditation to the Director only in cases where there is no modification to the scope of accreditation except in the following cases:

- the scope of accreditation contains more than three testing and calibration fields for Laboratories;
- the scope of accreditation contains more than two accreditation schemes for Certification Bodies;
- the number of non-conformities, in particular, major ones is consequent; and
- the risks associated with the CAB's activities, location and personnel are considerable.

**8.6** In the event that a CAB requests changes to its schedule of accreditation (for eg. updates in methods, Technical Signatories, etc), the Director may consult the Accreditation Committee members on same prior to issuing the amended schedule.

**8.7** The CAB is informed about the decision within 7 working days of the AC meeting.

**8.8** All decisions, recommendations and opinions must be clearly reasoned and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Decision Table shall be signed by all AC members (present or absent).

## **9. Monitoring of members of the AC**

**9.1** The members attending the AC for the first time are briefed on their role in the AC as described in section pertaining to Decisions.

**9.2** The Director will monitor the performance of members of the AC, **F 2.21**, once every four years by either of the following methods:

- a) A member of the AC is provided with an assessment pack and accreditation report of a CAB which has already been reviewed and is requested to review and make his/her decision. A decision similar to the AC's decision will confirm competency.
- b) monitoring of the performance of the AC members through the discussions and decision-making of the committee.
- c) Evaluation of participation during assessor conclaves.

**9.3** MAURITAS will initiate appropriate action following the outcome of the evaluation.

## **10. Meetings**

**10.1** The AC shall meet as and when required.

**10.2** The AC shall confine their discussions to accreditation decisions as set out on the agenda prepared by MAURITAS, except as provided for under section pertaining to Minutes and Records of this procedure.

## **11. Meeting papers**

**11.1** In respect of each completed assessment, re-assessment or extra-ordinary visit of an applicant or accredited body, all members of the AC are provided with the accreditation report, all associated documentation, checklists and files as well as evidence of all implemented corrective actions for review.

**11.2** However, in cases where permanent or co-opted members are absent from a particular AC meeting, they shall submit their recommendation for decision prior to the meeting.

**11.3** An agenda and all papers must be submitted by MAURITAS to members of the AC prior to the meeting date. All documents relating to accreditation decisions shall be marked 'Confidential' and despatched in a safe and secure manner.

**11.4** The Secretary of the AC will make the necessary arrangements for performing the meeting as detailed in [Annex 1](#) of this document.

## **12. Minutes and Records**

**12.1** All documents, records and minutes of meetings relating to accreditation decisions shall be retained within appropriate files held by MAURITAS.

**12.2** Copies of all documents issued to AC members in connection with accreditation decisions shall be returned at the end of each meeting to the Secretary of the AC for disposal in an appropriate manner. If documents are circulated by email, members are requested to confirm deletion of all information provided.

**12.3** Concise minutes shall be kept for every meeting, including decisions and opinions and a list of committee members. The minutes shall be vetted by all members before approval by the Chairperson of the AC.

### 13. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

13.1. All members of the AC shall give an undertaking before each meeting, in the form of an undertaking of confidentiality in their attendance sheet, F 2.18, to the effect that they do not have any existing, prior or foreseeable interest, direct or indirect, either in the exercise they are about to carry out or in the company they are going to take decision on accreditation.

13.2. Members of the AC and, where relevant, co-opted members shall be advised by MAURITAS, prior each meeting, of the names of all applicant and accredited CABs and shall declare any interest in or association with such applicant and accredited CABs.

13.3. Members or co-opted members of the AC declaring such interests shall not be provided with any subsequent documents relating to the relevant applicant and accredited CAB and shall take no part in discussions or decision making related to the applicant concerned.

13.4. MAURITAS will select new co-opted members in cases where conflict of interest is declared.

13.5. Members of the AC shall sign a confidentiality statement in which they agree to maintain confidential all information which they may require or become acquainted with as a result of, or arising in the course of, their involvement with the AC and declare that there are no matters of which they are aware which could in general prejudice or appear to prejudice their integrity and impartiality in participating in the AC. If specific matters arise in a particular case, they should undertake to declare it and they should also declare that they are subject to no obligation which conflicts with such a confidentiality undertaking.

### 14 Delegation

14.1 In accordance with sub-section 8(5) of the Act, the AC may, in writing, delegate any of its powers to the Director, other than the power to grant a certificate and under the conditions listed in section 8.5 in this document.

### 15 Related Forms

15.1 Attendance Sheet for Accreditation Committee, F 2.18

15.2 Monitoring of Accreditation Committee Members, F 2.21

### Appendix A: Amendment Table

SN	Section	Amendment
1.	11.4	1. A new sub-section has been added which relate to Annex 1 'Duties of the Secretary of AC'



## **Annex 1: Duties of the Secretary of the AC before, during and after the meeting**

**Before** the AC, the Secretary of the AC will initiate the following actions:

1. Gets the accreditation report signed by the relevant Assessment Team.
2. Seeks date to hold the AC with Chairperson and arranges for the meeting.
3. Submits the accreditation report to the Director to prepare his Recommendation.
4. After receipt of the Recommendation, prepares the draft Summary of Decision.
5. Seeks approval of the co-opted member(s) by the Chairperson.
6. Requests members to declare conflict of interest, if any.
7. Circulates accreditation report and related evidences to members and co-opted members.
8. Redirects queries to Team Leader, if any.
9. Submits clarification to Chairperson/members.

**During** the AC, the Secretary of the AC will initiate the following actions:

1. Maintains the Attendance Sheet, **F 2.18**.
2. Finalises the Recommendation Report and the Summary of Decision or any other requested documents and gets it signed by the Members/Co-opted members.
3. In case reports and evidences were circulated in pendrive or CD, ensures that same are returned by members who sign the relevant form when doing so.

**After** the AC, the Secretary of the AC will initiate the following actions:

1. Prepares the Notes of Meeting and sends to Director for vetting, then to the members and finally to the Chairperson.
2. Circulates the Summary of Decision/Notes of Meeting and the Accreditation Reports to the case officers for appropriate actions.
3. Processes payment of members.
4. Requests members to confirm deletion of any documents sent by email or saved otherwise.