

**PROCEDURE FOR ISSUANCE,
SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF
CERTIFICATION**

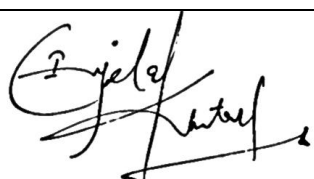
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AMENDMENT RECORD

DCRF	PAGE NO.	REVISION NO.	DATE REVISED	CHANGES
	06	00	01/01/2022	Removal of process flow
	03	01	01/12/2022	Changes in Criteria for the certification cycle.
	08	02	16/11/2024	Addition of process flow chart.



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1. Introduction

This procedure describes the methods for the issuance, suspension and withdrawal of the certification according to the requirements of the following standards:

- ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Conformity assessment- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-2:2016, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of environmental management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-3:2017, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of quality management systems.
- ISO/IEC 17021-10:2018, Conformity assessment— Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 3: Competence requirements for auditing & certification of Occupational Health & Safety Management systems.
- ISO 22003-1:2022, Food Safety- Part 1: Requirements for Bodies Providing audit & certification of food safety management systems.
- G-02/19-Rev 07, PNAC Guidelines of Accreditation Conditions for Certification Bodies.

2. Applicability and Scope

This procedure is applicable to the activities related to certification in Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited.

3. Procedure

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The certification body shall maintain and make publicly accessible, or provide upon request, information describing its audit processes and certification processes for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification, and about the certification activities, types of management systems and geographical areas in which it operates.
- 3.1.2 Information provided by the certification body to any client or to the marketplace, including advertising, shall be accurate and not misleading.
- 3.1.3 The certification body shall make publicly accessible information about certifications granted, suspended or withdrawn. Further The certification status can be traced through ACI website.
- 3.1.4 On request from any party, the certification body shall provide the means to confirm the validity of a given certification.

- 3.1.5 If the total information is split between several sources (e.g., in printed or electronic form or a combination of both), a system ensuring traceability and absence of ambiguity between the sources can be implemented (e.g., unique numbering system, or hyperlinks on Internet).
- 3.1.6 In exceptional cases, access to certain information can be limited on the request of the client (e.g., for security reasons).

3.2 Issuance of Certificate

- 3.2.1 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must formally appoint an audit team, consisting of Auditors (s) and technical expert(s). When selecting the audit team, Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must ensure that the expertise brought to each assignment is appropriate & relevant. Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must ensure that team members act in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner.
- 3.2.2 ACI's certification cycle will begin from the date of issuance of certificate. The certification cycle is of 3 years. The initial certification process is organized in such a manner that the certification decision shall be made within six months after the last day of the Stage 2 audit. In case this is not possible, a new audit equivalent to stage 2 Mandays shall be done.
- 3.2.3 A renewed or restored certificate follows the initial certification cycle dates, and expiry date is based upon initial cycle. When the certification is renewed or restored, a new certificate is delivered to the client. This is submitted to a certification decision following main steps of the initial process, and recertification audit shall be fully closed out. Renewal of certification is decided within the 3-year cycle, before the certificate expiry date. The recertification audit is scheduled 3 to 4 months before the expiry date of the current certificate.
- 3.2.4 Recertification shall not be recommended if recertification audit is not completed, that includes: Certification Decision and Recertification closure of major non-conformities; review and acceptance of plan for corrections and corrective actions for minor non-conformity. When the certification is not renewed nor restored, the client shall be informed, and the consequences shall be explained.
- 3.2.5 The validity of a certificate cannot be extended. The certification can be renewed before expiry; or restored within 6 months from expiry date.
- 3.2.6 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must inform the client of the names of the members of the audit team and the organization they belong to, sufficiently in advance to allow the client to object to the appointment of any auditor or expert.
- 3.2.7 The audit team must conduct the audit of the services of the client at its premises from which one or more key activities are performed. To obtain objective evidence of client's applicable scope to conform the standard(s) and other requirements for certification, the audit team must perform witnessing at other locations where the client operates.
- 3.2.8 The audit team must analyze all relevant information and evidence gathered during the document and record review and the on-site audit. This analysis must be sufficient to allow the team to determine the

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extent of competence and conformity of the client with the requirements for certification. The team's observations on areas for possible improvement may also be presented to the client. However, consultancy must not be provided by any member of the audit team.

- 3.2.9 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must ensure that in decision making process at least one technical auditor/expert shall be part of the Decision-Making process. Acerta Certification's Decision-Making Committee member must, without delay, make the decision on whether to grant, extend, maintain certification on the basis of an evaluation of the information received. The group or individual that takes the decision on granting, maintaining, renewing, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification understands the applicable standard and certification requirements, and demonstrated competence to evaluate the audit processes and related recommendations of the audit team. The decision committee members are different from the personnel of the audit team who conducted the audit.
- 3.2.10 Manager Operations/ MR is responsible for selection of the Decision Committee member for taking the Decision on the client file. Certification Manager will be responsible for selecting the Decision Committee member, in case if the Operations Manager is the part of the audit team. In case if both are the part of the audit team then CEO will select the member for the Decision.
- 3.2.11 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited undertakes the audit itself, on which certification is based. Acerta Certification & Inspection shall not subcontract the decision-making. If Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited subcontracts audits, it must have a policy describing the conditions under which subcontracting may take place.
- 3.2.12 Where the Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited uses the results of an audit already performed by another CB, it must have assurance that the other CB was operating in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Standard.
- 3.2.13 It is mandatory that complete audit pack containing the data of current year certification cycle as well as previous years' data will be shared with the Decision-Making Committee for review.
- 3.2.14 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must provide following documents to its certified clients:
- Display Certificate (Printed)
 - Recommendation/Confirmation Letter in PDF form via email. (optional)
 - Registered ACI mark in EPS and JPG form via email.
- 3.2.15 Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must provide a certificate to the certified client. This certificate must identify (on the front page, if possible) the following:
- The identity and logo of the Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited;
 - The unique identity of the certified client;

- c. All premises from which one or more key activities are performed, and which are covered by the certification;
- d. The unique number of the certified client;
- e. The effective date of granting of certification and, as applicable, the expiry date;
- f. A brief indication of, or reference to, the scope of certification;
- g. A statement of conformity and reference to ISO 17021-1-2015 standard or other
- h. Normative document(s), including issue/revision used for assessment of the client.

3.2.16 Extension of certification could be granted to clients, up-to maximum three months due to unforeseen situations like outbreak of COVID 19 in the organization, etc. where the conduction of audit is not possible by ACI. In such circumstances, an Extension Letter will be issued by ACI to the client. The status of client certification extension will also be updated on ACI portal accordingly.

3.3 Extensions to scope

Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited. must, in response to an application for extension to the scope of a certification already granted, undertake a review of the application and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension is granted. This is conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit.

It is necessary for Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as follow-up on suspended clients. In such cases Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must describe and make known in advance to the certified clients the conditions under which these short notice visits are to be conducted, and Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited must exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team because of the lack of opportunity for the client to object to audit team members.

3.3.1 Suspending, Withdrawing Or Reducing The Scope Of Certification

3.3.3.1 ACI has a policy and documented procedure(s) for suspension, withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification, and specifies the subsequent actions by the ACI.

3.3.3.2 ACI suspends certification in cases when, for example,

- a. the client's certified system has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the system,
- b. the certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies, or
- c. the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.

3.3.3.3 Under suspension, the client's certification is temporarily invalid. The ACI has enforceable arrangements with its clients to ensure that in case of suspension the client refrains from further promotion of its certification. ACI makes the suspended status of the certification publicly accessible and takes any other measures it deems appropriate.

3.3.3.4 Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by ACI results in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

NOTE In most cases the suspension may not exceed 6 months.

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- 3.3.3.5** The ACI reduces the client's scope of certification to exclude the parts not meeting the requirements, when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification. Any such reduction may in line with the requirements of the standard used for certification.
- 3.3.3.6** Acerta Certification & Inspection Private Limited has enforceable arrangements with the certified client concerning conditions of withdrawal ensuring upon notice of withdrawal of certification that the client discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to a certified status.
- 3.3.3.7** If ACI client decides to get certification suspended or withdrawn, voluntarily or involuntarily, IHC sends the case to Decision Making Committee which grants the final decision regarding suspension and withdrawal. The Decision Making Committee Members may vary on a case of case basis.
- 3.3.3.8** Upon request by any party, ACI correctly states the status of certification of a client as being suspended, withdrawn or reduced.

4. Administrative and Technical Review

Certification package for decision making includes:

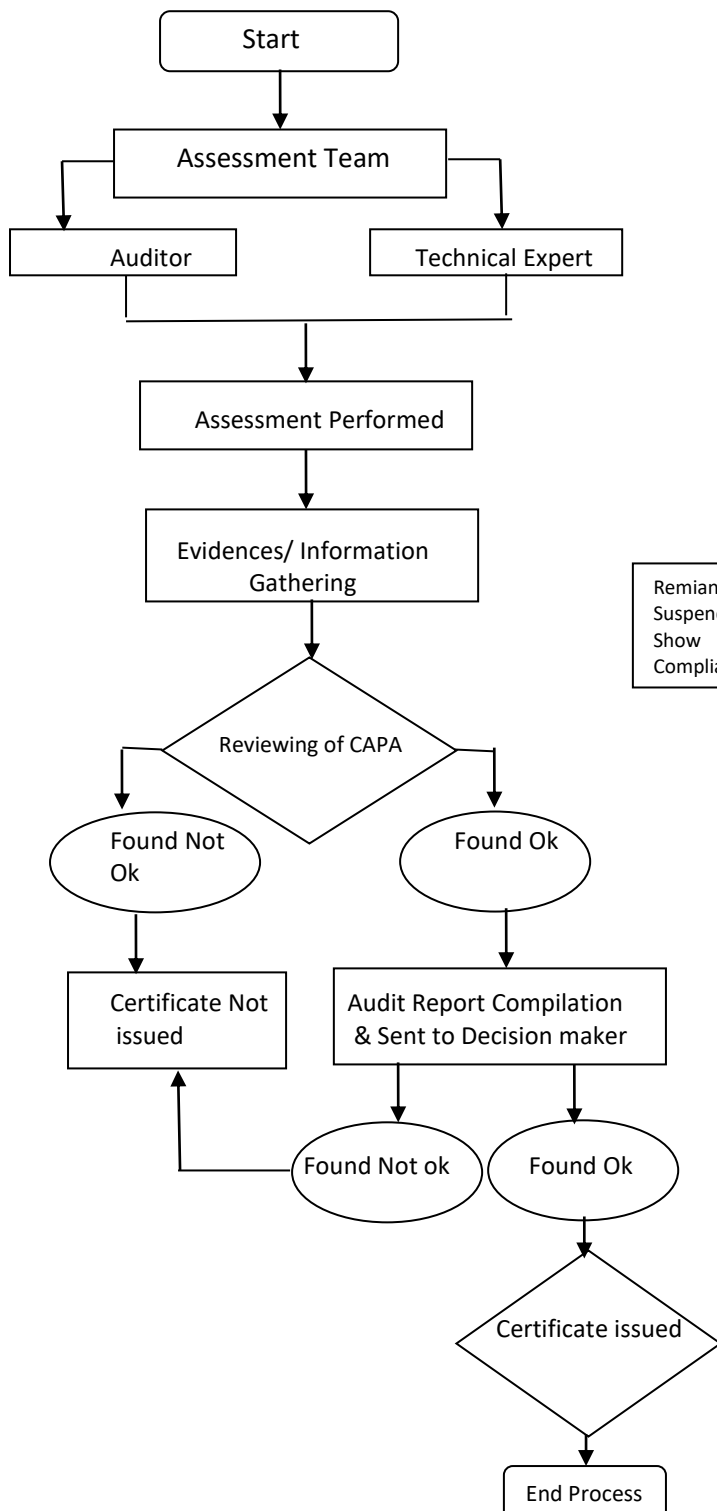
- Application Form;
- Signed contract;
- Audit Program & Audit Plan
- Checklist (Not Mandatory)
- Audit Report;
- Major and minor non-conformities cleared;
- Draft of certificate showing all information to be included.
- Copy of previous certificate, in case of Surveillance, recertification or transfer

5. Related Documents

- Recommendation Letter (RL) (ACI-F037)
- Decision Making Committee (ACI-DMC-001)
- Policy For Suspension, Withdrawing, Reducing the Scope of Certification (ACI-SP-001)
- Policy for Outsourcing (ACI-OS-001)
- Suspension Communication (ACI-F035)
- Withdraw or Confirmation of Suspension (ACI-F036)
- Terms of Reference for Decision committee (ACI-F049)

6. Process Flow

A- Issuance of Certificate



B- Suspension & Withdrawal

