INSTITUTE FOR ACCREDITATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Suspension and withdrawal of the accreditation

PR 10-01

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure, issued by the Director of the Institute for Accreditation of the Republic of North Macedonia (hereinafter: IARNM) pursuant to Article 23 of the Statute of IARNM, is to define the activities in case of suspension and withdrawal of the accreditation.

2. REASONS AND PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE ACCREDITATION

The Director of IARNM shall make a decision to suspend or withdraw the accreditation on form OB 05-13-1, if it is determined that the accredited body does not meet consistently the accreditation requirements, does not respect the accreditation rules, and seriously violates its obligations under the accreditation contract.
Suspension, withdrawal or reducing of the accreditation shall be done in a way that the members of the assessment team, the lead assessor or coordinator (in exceptional cases listed below) and the accreditation commission fulfill in the forms OB 05-17 and OB 05-17-1, respectively, which give recommendations to the Director for suspension, withdrawal or reducing of the accreditation. The final decision shall be made by the Director.
By way of exception, where the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation is imposed due to the conformity assessment body's failure to fulfil its financial obligations towards IARNM, the Director of IARNM shall directly issue a decision on the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

2.1 Suspension of the accreditation

Suspension is the temporary withdrawal of accreditation, the duration of which shall not exceed six months, irrespective of the reasons for and basis on which it is imposed.

2.1.1 Suspension of the accreditation by IARNM

The Director of IARNM shall decide on the suspension of accreditation for the entire scope or part thereof if the conformity assessment body fails to resolve the nonconformities within the specified timeframe (as defined in Procedure PR 05-06, Grading of Nonconformities).
Following the decision to suspend the full scope accreditation, IARNM shall notify the accredited body of the suspension and at the same time, shall publish in the register of accredited bodies on the IARNM website, besides the name of the suspended accredited body, the suspension and the date of suspension thus disabling access to the certificate attachment. During that period, the accredited body shall not use the accreditation mark or refer to accreditation in any other way.
In case of partial suspension of accreditation, in the Register of Accredited Bodies published on the IARNM website (in the Annex to the accreditation certificate), the suspended method shall be highlighted in red, with the word “Suspended” entered below it, together with the date of suspension.
If the suspended accredited body removes the reasons for suspension within the specified period, IARNM shall restore the initial status.

2.1.2 Suspension of the accreditation at the request of the accredited body

The accredited body shall have the right to request suspension of the accreditation, when it determines that it does not meet the requirements for accreditation or for other reasons. In such cases, the body is required to submit a written request to IARNM for the suspension of accreditation. In case of suspension of the accreditation at the request of the accredited body, the suspension and the date of suspension of the accreditation shall be published in the register of accredited bodies on the IARNM website, indicating that it is at the request of the accredited body.

2.1.3 Suspension of the accreditation in case of non-fulfillment of the obligations of the accredited body toward IARNM

Accreditation shall also be suspended in cases where the accredited body does not fulfill the obligations defined by the contract (does not report changes related to circumstances that could affect its competence, such as changes in legal, business or organizational accredited body status, management, key management, non-compliance with transition plans followed by changes to accreditation requirements, etc.).
Accreditation shall also be suspended when the client does not fulfill the financial or other general obligations related to the accreditation procedure, which doesn't have to refer to non-compliance with the standard.
When IARNM determines that the accredited body fails to notify IARNM of changes defined in the contract and such failure is repeated or fails to fulfil other obligations defined in the contract, thereby causing IARNM to lose confidence in the work of the accredited body, the Director, upon the recommendation of the lead assessor and the Commission for accreditation, shall make a decision to suspend the accreditation.
In case of non-fulfillment of the financial obligations, the following activities shall be undertaken: Within one month from the non-fulfillment of the financial obligations from the contract, the head of the department for financial affairs or person responsible for financial operations of IARNM shall inform by phone and warn the accredited body in writing. Within two months after the non-fulfillment of the obligations of the contract by the client, a second written warning shall follow. If the conformity assessment body fails to fulfil its financial obligations towards IARNM, and upon the expiry of three (3) months from the due date for payment of the invoice, the Director shall decide to suspend the accreditation.
If the accredited body removes the reasons for suspension from a financial aspect, i.e. fulfills the obligations within the specified timeframe, the Director shall decide to restore its initial status.

2.2 Withdrawal of the accreditation

IARNM can withdraw its accreditation and thereby terminate the accreditation contract. After the withdrawal of the accreditation, the body whose accreditation has been withdrawn can reapply for accreditation, provided that at least six (6) months have elapsed from the date of withdrawal. The application in this case shall be processed according to the usual procedure as a new application.

2.2.1 Withdrawal of the accreditation by IARNM

If the reasons for suspension are not removed, after the expiration of the deadline the Director shall decide to withdraw the accreditation. IARNM shall inform the accredited body about the decision and at the same time remove it from the Register of Accredited Bodies and then publish its decision and information on the withdrawal status of the accreditation on the website. The client shall be required to return all valid accreditation certificates within eight (8) days.

The Director of IARNM can immediately withdraw the accreditation when there is evidence that the accredited body does not meet the requirements of the standard and when there is a high probability that the results and decisions of the accredited body are incorrect and IARNM loses confidence in the further work of the accredited body.
The decision for immediate withdrawal of the accreditation shall be made based on the recommendation of the Commission for accreditation where a significant deviation from the accreditation requirements is identified through means other than assessment activities related to:

- the legal, business or organizational status of the accredited body;
- policies and procedures;
- authorized signatories;
- staff, equipment, capacity, etc.;
- evidence of fraudulent conduct, that the conformity assessment body intentionally provides false information or that the conformity assessment body conceals information.

Following the decision to withdraw the accreditation, IARNM shall inform the accredited body about decision and at the same time remove it from the register of accredited bodies and publish the information on the withdrawal status of the accreditation on the website.
The body whose accreditation has been withdrawn shall be required to return all valid accreditation certificates within eight (8) days.

2.2.2 Withdrawal of the accreditation at the request of the accredited body

The accredited body shall have the right to request withdrawal of the accreditation, and the request must be submitted in writing. The Director shall make decision for withdrawal of the accreditation based on the recommendation of the lead assessor and the Commission for accreditation. Where the coordinator possesses the relevant knowledge, the Director can decide to withdraw accreditation, based on the recommendation of the coordinator and the Commission for Accreditation.

2.3 Reducing the accreditation scope

The scope of accreditation of the accredited body shall be reduced due to the failure to resolve of the causes that led to the suspension of accreditation for part of the accreditation scope or if the accredited conformity assessment body (CAB) does not demonstrate competence in a certain part of the accredited scope during two subsequent assessments. By way of exception, based on assessment team judgement, the assessment team can accept if the CAB can otherwise demonstrate competence e.g. simulation of method performance, simulation of inspection/certification activity, participation in PT/ILC/EQA then, reduction of the scope can be prolonged until the end of the current accreditation cycle.

The accreditation scope of the accredited body can be reduced at the request of the accredited body.
After reducing part of the accreditation scope, the accredited body can re-apply for extension for the same part of the accreditation scope, in a period not shorter than six months from the date of reducing that part of the scope. The application in this case shall be processed according to the usual procedure as an application for extending the accreditation scope.

3. OBLIGATION OF ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION BODIES THAT ARE IN SUSPENSION OR WHOSE ACCREDITATION IS WITHDROWN IN RELATION TO THE STATUS OF THE ISSUED CERTIFICATES (DOCUMENTS)

When accreditation is suspended or withdrawn, the organization can no longer provide accredited services and must inform all current and potential clients of this status, as well as the status of certificates issued before the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation. Any accredited certification body whose accreditation has been suspended or withdrawn, in its management system must have a clear policy that provides recognition of the status of certificates, which it issues during the validity of the accreditation certificate.
This policy should include those cases where the accredited certification body stops working and there are still certificates that have emerged from its accredited activities.
Certificates issued during the suspension or after withdrawal the accreditation does not have the status of accredited certificates.
Existing issued certificates and reports will remain valid as they have been issued before IARSM's decision to sanction (suspension or withdrawal) unless they have been misused. In this case, the certification body will contact the clients concerned to withdraw the certificate or report.
Certificates with a certain period of validity are valid until the expiry date of validity, regardless of changes in the accredited status of the certification body that has issued them.
Certificates with a certain period of validity which cover periodic audits/evaluations until the first next audit/evaluation term provided by the certification body to which accreditation is suspended or withdrawn.
Certificates undertaken by the accredited certification body are valid based on conditions under which the accredited body that has undertaken them operates.