

Att.: CBs accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021

Our ref.: DC2016SSV311

Milan, 11/10/2016

**Subject.: ACCREDIA Department of Certification and Inspection – Circular n. 28/2016**  
**Clarifications regarding recent interpretations published by the Maintenance Group of ISO CASCO concerning the topics:**

- **Renewal of certification**
- **Certification of a CB in accordance with ISO 9001**
- **Temporary Site on certificates**
- **Periodicity of internal audits**

The ISO/CASCO Maintenance Group recently published four interpretations of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, attached herewith. The documents can be found, in their updated version, in the ISO website [http://www.iso.org/iso/conformity-assessment\\_resources](http://www.iso.org/iso/conformity-assessment_resources)

Some clarifications are given below:

#### **1. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 9.6.3.2.4 and 9.6.3.2.5 – Renewal of certification**

If renewal activities are not successfully completed within the expiry date of the certificate it is necessary to proceed – depending on applicability – as follows:

a) *Renewal activity (verification and decision) begins before or after the date of expiry of the certification and it shall be successfully completed within 6 months of the expiry of the certification.*

Following the expiry of the certificate, the CB may, within 6 months, renew certification, as long as certification renewal activities have been successfully completed (e.g. completion of the renewal audit, verification of the implementation of treatments and corrective actions undertaken by the organization if there are any major nonconformities and the relative decision). If it is intended to maintain the past validity of the certificate, the certificate is re-issued with evidence on the certificate of the period of non-validity (the period between the expiry date of the previous cycle of certification to the date of the decision to renew it) and with the expiry date based on the date of the previous cycle of certification.

It is possible also not to state the initial date of the certificate (or the cycle/s or previous cycle/s), but also in such cases the expiry shall tally with that of the previous cycle, and the date of issue (start of validity / effective date) shall be after or shall coincide with the date of decision of renewal following the expiry.

The duration of the verification is the same as that for a renewal audit.

b) *The renewal activities (audit and decision) begin before or after the date of expiry of the certification but they finish more than 6 months after the date of expiry, but not more than one year after the expiry*

Following the expiry of the certificate, the CB may, also after 6 months, restore certification as long as the certification renewal activities have been successfully completed (performance or completion of the renewal audit, verification of the implementation of treatments and corrective actions following any major nonconformities and the relative decision). In such cases, if it is intended to maintain the past validity of the certificate, with evidence on the certificate of the period of non-validity (the period between the expiry date of the previous cycle of certification to the date of the decision to restore it) and with the expiry date based on the date of the previous cycle of certification.

The duration of the audit is the same as for a Stage 2 audit (with a minimum duration which is not less than for a renewal audit).

It is possible also not to state the initial date of the certificate (or the cycle/s or previous cycle/s), but also in such cases the expiry shall correspond to that of the previous cycle, and the date of issue (start of validity / effective date) shall be after or shall coincide with the date of decision of renewal following the expiry.

c) *The renewal activities (audit and decision) are not completed within one year after the expiry date of the certificate.*

The CB may still decide to perform an initial audit (or incorporate the audit which has already begun, to reach a duration which is equivalent to a Stage 1 + Stage 2 audit), and issue a new certificate without retaining the past validity of the certificate.

This does not constitute renewal, but a new certification.

d) *In all the above cases, and therefore when audit activities are begun and/or completed after the expiry of the certificate, the CB may always decide to perform an initial audit (Stage 1 + Stage 2), and issue a new certificate without retaining the past validity of the certificate.*

Moreover:

- In the certificate it is not necessary to state any periods of suspension, but only those periods of non-validity due to failed renewal;
- Also if the certificate has a duration of less than 3 years due to postponement of the renewal, the principle remains applicable whereby within the cycle of certification (from the decision for renewal, which may be postponed, to the subsequent renewal), all the requirements and all the scope of certification shall be covered (see ISO 17021-1:2015 § 9.1.3.1 and 9.1.3.2), with surveillance visits done at least once per year.

With regard to the ACCREDIA database, further information will be provided at a later date.

**IAF Sector 28, ISO 9001 and relations with AVCPass/ANAC:** it is to be remembered that renewal is not carried out before the expiry of the certificate. The certificate automatically becomes invalid, with relative consequences regarding the maintenance of the SOA attestation, also if a delay in renewal is only one day. It therefore changes nothing with respect to the rules currently in force concerning the database of certified organizations in the construction sector. If the certificate is not re-activated by means of a performed and completed audit, at the most within one year of the expiry date, the organization may present the new certificate (the validity of which shall have a shorter duration than the usual 3 years) to the SOA and to the other competent bodies.

The possibility remains that a new evaluation of the matter will be carried out in the coming months.

## **2. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 5.2.4 – A body accredited to ISO/IEC 17021 cannot have ISO 9001 certification**

The requirement, as stated and interpreted by ISO, shall be applied only to management system CBs and to their management system certification activities.

A management system certification body:

- cannot perform quality management system certification of another certification body, in conformity to ISO 9001, related solely to activities of certification of management systems;
- may certify the quality management system of another certification body in conformity to ISO 9001, for all activities which are different from MS certification (e.g. training, inspection etc.);
- may certify the quality management system of another certification body in conformity to different standards from the standard ISO 9001 (e.g. ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, ISO 27001 etc.), for all the activities / services performed by the body itself (e.g. training, inspection, certification of management systems, of products, of persons etc.).

## **3. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 8.2.2 – Temporary locations on the certificate**

The standard states that it is necessary to include in the certificate *the name and geographical location of every certified client (or the geographical location of the head office and all the sites covered by the scope of application of a multisite certification)*.

ISO has clarified that it is not a requirement that temporary sites are stated on the certificate (the example evaluated by ISO CASCO regarded ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certifications in the construction sector).

For the definition of a temporary site see § 1.5 of the document IAF MD 05:2015.

Temporary sites, as required by § 9 of the document IAF MD 05:2015, shall be included in the three-year audit program, and shall therefore be audited by sampling.

#### **4. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 10.2.6.3 – periodicity of the internal audits of a CB**

According to the standard a CB shall perform an internal audit at least once every 12 months. The periodicity of internal audits may be reduced if the CB is able to demonstrate that it has a stable management system and that it continues to be implemented effectively, in conformity to ISO/IEC 17021-1.

The ISO CASCO confirmed that internal audits may be conducted more frequently than every 12 months, but only if it is possible to demonstrate that the CB's management system is being implemented effectively.

It is therefore possible that a CB, in certain areas (departments, locations, sectors, services etc.) may conduct internal audits at intervals of over 12 months, if the above conditions are fulfilled.

Please contact us for any clarifications.

With kind regards,

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The Department Director

