

To all accredited certification bodies
To the associations of conformity assessment bodies
To all ACCREDIA DC department assessors and experts

SUBJECT **Certification and Inspection Department**
Information Circular DC N° 32/2021 - UNI ISO 21401:2019 – Tourism and related services – Management systems for sustainability in accommodation establishments - Requirements

The general reference framework

The tourism sector, including accommodation establishments, is one of the activities that increasingly influences global GDP. Also for this reason, the sector acquires great potential to improve its impact on the environment, to promote social exchanges and to contribute positively to local economies.

For this purpose, various sustainable tourism programs have been created over the years, proposed by travel operators or other organizations with commercial interests, which partially address the sustainability aspects related to the sector.

In 2018, the ISO 21401 standard "*Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments – Requirements*" was published which specifies the environmental, social and economic requirements for the implementation of a sustainability management system in tourist accommodation establishments by addressing topics such as human rights, health and safety for employees and guests, environmental protection, water and energy consumption, waste generation and development of the local economy.

Manuel Otero, president of the ISO technical committee that created the standard, stated that at present there are various initiatives on the market, not without commercial interests, which, although they support the tourism sector to improve environmental impacts, do not include any evaluation regarding the social and economic impacts of their activities: "*This internationally agreed standard provides clarity in a confused market, applies to all types of accommodation and can serve as a tool to improve sustainable management. It will also help stimulate the market for greater sustainability both in the accommodation sector and in the tourism industry as a whole*".

The increase in public sensitivity towards sustainability issues stimulates accommodation establishments and tourist organizations to provide a service that not only protects the environment but also pays attention to the social and economic dimension of sustainable development.

The standard, structured according to High Level Structure (HLS), enables an integrated implementation with other standards for management systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 45001, ISO 50001 ...) enabling easier conformity assessment by an independent third party.

The operators in the tourism sector, who choose to obtain accredited certification for the sustainability management system of accommodation establishments, can strengthen their image in terms of reputation and the reliability of their commercial offer by being more incisive on the market.

1) Certification rules

Accreditation standard	UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015
Certification standard	UNI ISO 21401:2019
Audit team competence criteria	<p>The audit team must have knowledge of the requirements of UNI ISO 21401: 2019, of the management system for sustainability in accommodation establishments and of how the processes interact to achieve the expected results.</p> <p>The audit team involved in the auditing process must have a level of competence that includes the competences described in Annex A of ISO/IEC 17021-1.</p> <p>The audit team must also be familiar with the issues and processes affecting sustainable development in the tourism sector.</p>
Decision maker and contract reviewer competence criteria	The decision maker and the contact reviewer must possess the competences set out in ISO/IEC 17021-1, they must know the terms, definitions, processes and requirements of UNI ISO 21401: 2019.
Audit times and frequency	<p>For the calculation of the duration, refer to Annex A of the IAF document MD 5:2019.</p> <p>Maintenance surveillance must be carried out annually. Any changes must be justified and recorded by the CB.</p>
IAF documents	All IAF management system documents are applicable.

2) Accreditation process

Various cases may occur, based on the ACCREDIA accreditations already obtained by the Certification Body making the application for accreditation or extension.

The requirements of the ACCREDIA regulations RG-01 and RG-01-01 for the granting of accreditation and extension remain unchanged.

Bodies already accredited to ISO/IEC 17021-1, do not need to have already issued certificates in this scheme to apply for an extension of accreditation.

The accreditation certificate does not state the relative accreditation sectors.

If the CB already possesses accreditations issued by other accreditation bodies, a case-by-case assessment must be made, based on the applicable EA/IAF MLA agreements.

A	CB already accredited against ISO/IEC 17021-1	Document review of 1 day 1 witness assessment
B	CB not yet accredited against ISO/IEC 17021-1 but accredited to other accreditation schemes	Document review of 1 day Witness assessment of 2 days at the CB's premises 1 witness assessment
C	CB not yet accredited against any scheme	Document review of 1 day Witness assessment of 4 days at the CB's premises 1 witness assessment

For the documentation to be submitted to ACCREDIA for document review, refer to the current revision at the time of the application:

- DA-00 – Application for accreditation;
- DA-01 – Application for accreditation for certification bodies.

3) Maintenance of accreditation

For the maintenance of accreditation, throughout the accreditation cycle, except for special situations (e.g., management of complaints and remarks, changes in the certification scheme, changes in the personnel structure of the CB, involvement in judicial cases ...), the following audits shall be conducted:

- if the CB has issued fewer than 50 certificates in the certification scheme, 1 witness assessment and 1 on-site assessment specific to this scheme must be carried out. However, in the case of a small number of certificates (<10), it is possible to carry out only one assessment in the cycle (on site or witness);
- if the CB has issued between 51 and 200 certificates in the certification scheme, 2 witness assessments and 1 on-site assessment specific to this scheme must be carried out;
- if the CB has issued more than 201 certificates in the certification scheme, 2 witness assessments and 2 on-site assessments specific to this scheme must be carried out.

It is confirmed that every year ACCREDIA shall conduct 1 on-site assessment at the certification body in order to assess conformity to ISO/IEC 17021-1.

We are available for any clarifications.

With kind regards,

Dott. Emanuele Riva

Director Department
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