

To all accredited and applicant CABs

To the associations of CABs

To all ACCREDIA assessors and experts

SUBJECT **Certification and Inspection Department**

Informative Circular DC N° 33/2022 – Changes to accreditation activities following the publication of the document EA-3/12 M:2022 “EA Policy for the Accreditation of Organic Production Certification”

Following the recent publication of the document EA-3/12 M:2022 "EA Policy for the Accreditation of Organic Production Certification" (applicable from 9 March 2023)" relating to accreditations for the organic sector, mandatory for EA signatory Accreditation Bodies, with this information circular we inform you of the main changes that impact on accreditation activities:

- *Calculation of days for accreditation maintenance activities (surveillance and renewals):* The 2022 revision of the document retained the same criterion for calculating audit days applied for surveillance and renewal checks as defined in the 2020 revision of the document itself. These criteria have therefore already been applied by ACCREDIA for planning 2022;
- *Management of branch offices in the EU: In line with the provisions of ISO/IEC 17011:2017, the accreditation body must prepare a risk analysis to assess the importance of the branch offices and the relative frequency of assessments. The EA document defines the minimum risk factors that ACCREDIA must take into consideration in this analysis for CABs operating in the organic sector.*

For this reason, ACCREDIA will ask the CABs on an annual basis to complete the module MD-08-20-DC for the purposes of the census/update of the branch offices. Only the sites that are relevant will be included in the accreditation certificate and all the sites, relevant and otherwise, will be assessed with a frequency calculated on the basis of the risk analysis;

- *Management of peripheral offices in Third Countries:* the principle described above applies, with the only difference that the offices in which the certification decision is

taken must be assessed in presence every year (the remote mode is only granted upon explicit authorization of the Commission);

- *Planning of witness assessments:* the EA document defines criteria for planning witness audits in the EU and in Third Countries. In the first case, there are no changes compared to the normal planning adopted by ACCREDIA up to now. For third countries, on the other hand, the criteria (see §4.7.1 of the document) are in line with the provisions of the applicable European Regulations, and may determine, starting from 2023, a significant increase in the *witness assessments* carried out by ACCREDIA, which must be conducted in presence (the remote mode is only granted upon explicit authorization of the Commission);
- *Planning activities for equivalence in third countries:* although the equivalence will remain in force until 31 December 2024, ACCREDIA will have to plan the audit activities in third countries as of 2023 as foreseen in paragraph 4 of document EA-3 / 12.
- *Scope of accreditation:* The main change to the accreditation scope envisaged by the document EA-3/12 is that it must include in addition to all the applicable Regulations related to Regulation (EU) 2018/848, also the main applicable national laws and the standard control procedure adopted by the CAB as required by art. 40.1.a.ii .;

For this reason, CABs must promptly notify ACCREDIA of any changes to the control standard. Once the document is also approved by the Ministry, ACCREDIA will update the accreditation scope by incorporating the new revision.

We also ask you, following the publication of Decree No. 229771 of 20/05/2022, to communicate to ACCREDIA by 31/10/2022 how it has been implemented in the CAB's management system.

Finally, we take this opportunity to remind you that for the category extension activity, until the relevant pure products categories are obtained, the certificates issued by CABs for the requested categories will not be permitted to carry the ACCREDIA logo.

The certificates can be reissued with the ACCREDIA logo only after the granting by the Sectoral Agri-food Accreditation Committee of the extension of the accreditation to the requested category.

For any clarifications we ask CABs to contact ACCREDIA's Technical Officer Marco Zanardi (m.zanardi@accredia.it).

With kind regards

Dott. Emanuele Riva

Director Department
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