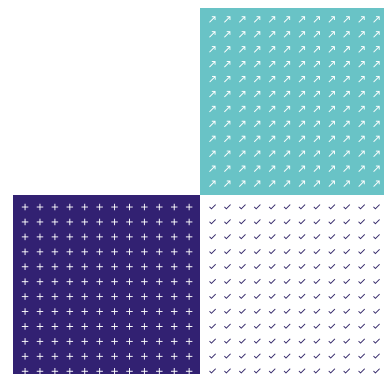


TPS 62

Edition 3 May 2023

Management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting UKAS accredited Certification, Validation and Verification Bodies and their clients



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Changes since last edition

Clarification that the TPS covers all certification activities.

Addition of validation and verification activities.

Addition of guidance regarding initial assessments and scope extensions.

Consideration of lessons learned from the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to define the UKAS policy regarding actions to be taken by accredited Certification and Validation/Verification Bodies (hereafter referred to as CABs) in the event of any extraordinary event or circumstance that prevents the execution of certification/validation/verification activity in accordance with standard operating processes/procedures.
- 1.2 This Technical Policy takes account of IAF Informative Document *IAF ID 3: 2011 Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations*.
- 1.3 The Technical Policy is applicable to all accredited certification activities including ISO/IEC 17021-1 for Management Systems; ISO/IEC 17065 for products, processes and services; ISO/IEC 17024 for persons and ISO/IEC 17029 & ISO 14065 for validation & verification activities.
- 1.4 It should be noted that EA and/or IAF may issue specific guidance and instructions for any extraordinary event or circumstance affecting accredited activity, and this may take precedence over UKAS guidance. Where this is the case, such guidance must be taken into account. Also, CABs should take note of any guidance or instruction published by sectors, regulators or scheme owners. UKAS may also issue specific guidance for a given situation.



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2. Definitions

2.1 Extraordinary event or circumstance:

A circumstance beyond the control of the organisation; commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “act of God”. Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.

(Taken from IAF ID 3: 2011)

3. Requirements placed on the Certification/Validation/Verification Body

3.1 Initial actions

The CAB should consider separately, the impact for/on any new activity within the affected UKAS accredited scope and the impact upon the continuation of any existing activity (i.e. certification/validation/verification) within the affected UKAS accredited scope.

For each affected case, the CAB will need to consider and evaluate the risks presented to the CAB and to the activity concerned.

Where existing activity, the CAB will need to take account of the extent of the impact on the certified organisation, product, or individual concerned and to determine whether it is possible for certification to be maintained under the circumstances. The outcome of the review must be recorded.

CABs issuing UKAS certificates impacted by the extraordinary event/circumstance must inform their UKAS Assessment Manager of the extent of the problem for their UKAS accredited activities as soon as reasonable and practicable. In particular the CAB should inform their Assessment Manager of any cases that, taking into account projected timescales for the event preventing access to the area, may result in a high risk to the integrity of the certificate or certified activity concerned. The information provided should include:

- Scope and extent of the affected services and business areas and sites.
- The possible effect of any delay on the technical integrity of the certification and the current and ongoing certified activity (taking into account industry advice and guidance).
- Number of affected clients.
- When the CAB will be able to function normally within the current scope of accreditation.
- Any methodologies that will be used to maintain confidence in the certified clients’ systems during the period that access cannot be gained, including the use of remote auditing techniques and IT systems (please refer to IAF MD 4:2022 *IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes*, and IAF ID 12:2015 *Principles on Remote Assessment*).

3.2 **Surveillance activities**

Delayed surveillance activities must be completed as quickly as possible once the emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational. Wherever possible the surveillance must take place within the current certification year. Subsequent surveillance activities should continue in line with the original programme.

Extended periods between surveillance visits may result in a need for additional surveillance visits for the remainder of the certification cycle.

In the meantime, CABs should consider other means of monitoring that may be available such as telephone interviews, internet-based assessments and desktop reviews of submitted documentation (see above).

3.3 **Recertification**

UKAS will, unless otherwise stated i.e. where this is not possible due to a particular situation, allow a maximum 6 months overrun for recertification audits. CABs should record where this has been applied, along with all pertinent supporting information.

If the recertification assessment cannot be undertaken within 6 months, the certification should be suspended, and a new initial assessment will be required, unless the extraordinary event still prevents normal operations, in which case actions would be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

3.4 **Initial assessments and extensions to scope**

Where a CAB receives, during an extraordinary event, an application for initial certification/validation/verification, or an extension to scope application, the same principles of risk evaluation as defined above shall apply and shall be considered during the contract review. However, in considering the methodologies and risks involved in progressing applications the CAB should also consider the degree of urgency and whether the certification/validation/verification can be delayed.

Please note that the IAF has stated that it is feasible to carry out a complete initial audit using remote methodologies but in such cases the use of the defined methods must be clearly presented.

3.5 **Records**

The CAB will maintain full records of actions taken, together with the rationale behind decisions on actions taken. These records shall be made available for UKAS to review upon demand.

4. **UKAS actions**

4.1 The UKAS Assessment Manager will complete and record a detailed review of the information provided by the CAB.

4.2 As part of the above review, it may be necessary to liaise with UKAS Technical Focus Persons and Scheme Owners where specific sector schemes are involved.



- 4.3 If the CABs' responses and plans meet the intent and specific requirements of this policy and demonstrate control of the situation by the CAB, this will be confirmed with the CAB. UKAS may request further clarification and will work in cooperation with the CAB to ensure that suitable actions and controls are implemented.
- 4.4 The Assessment Manager will maintain communications with the CAB to track any developments and ensure that the plans presented by the CAB are completed.

5. Contact

- 5.1 For further information about this Technical Policy Statement, contact UKAS:

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Accredited CABs should also contact your Assessment Manager.