

SUSPENSION, REDUCTION, WITHDRAWAL AND RE-INSTATEMENT OF ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS

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Table of Contents

	Page
1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE	3
2. DEFINITIONS.....	3
3. TYPES OF SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION.....	3
4. REASONS FOR SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION	4
4.1 Suspension for Non-compliance with Requirements	4
4.2 Suspension for Exceeding the Corrective Action Timeframe	4
4.3 Suspension for Non-payment of Fees.....	4
4.4 Suspension due to Change of Physical Location or Loss of Approved Signatories.....	5
5. WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION	5
6. CONDITIONS OF SUSPENSION, REDUCTION OR WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION	6
7. RE-INSTatement OF SUSPENDED ORGANIZATIONS	7
8. REFERENCES.....	7
APPENDIX – AMENDMENT RECORD	8

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document describes the procedure to be followed when organizations are to be suspended for:

- a) Non-compliance with requirements.
- b) Exceeding the corrective action timeframe.
- c) Non-payment of fees.
- d) Change of physical location or loss of approved signatories.

It also addresses the procedure to be followed to re-instate the organizations.

Note: This procedure applies to all accredited laboratories, inspection and certification bodies.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Suspension of Accreditation: accreditation is temporarily made invalid for the full scope of accreditation of a facility or part thereof.
- 2.2 Reduction of Accreditation: Accreditation is cancelled for part of the scope of accreditation.
- 2.3 Withdrawal of accreditation: Accreditation is permanently made invalid for the full scope of accreditation or part thereof.

3. TYPES OF SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION

3.1 Suspension of a facility may be either:

- 3.1.1 **Voluntary Suspension:** An organization may apply to the Technical Manager (TM) in writing with valid reasons to be placed on suspension. Accredited organizations that are placed in voluntary suspension shall give an undertaking to adequately address the circumstances that caused the request for suspension within three months of the date of suspension. Accredited organizations in voluntary suspension for longer than three months are **required to apply in writing to SADCAS for permission for a continuation of the voluntary suspension of each** further one-month period. Suspension period shall not exceed six months.
- 3.1.2 **Enforced Suspension:** The TM shall inform the organization that they are to be suspended and detail the reason(s) for suspension. The letter shall detail the maximum length of the suspension (six months) and it shall also detail that fees are payable in full during such a period of suspension.
- 3.1.3 **Partial suspension:** Only part of the scope of accreditation is suspended.

3.2

Suspended organisations are required to submit an action plan/programme of action to SADCAS indicating actions (with timelines) to be taken to address reasons for suspension. SADCAS shall evaluate the plan and monitor to ensure that a decision on reinstatement is made before the end of suspension period.

4. REASONS FOR SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION

4.1 Suspension for Non-compliance with Requirements

4.1.1 On the recommendation of the assessment team and approval by the Accreditation Approvals Committee (AAC) an accredited organization may be suspended for non-compliance with requirements.

4.1.2 If, after investigation resulting from a complaint, an organization is found to be non-compliant it may also be suspended.

4.1.3 The assessment team shall inform the organization of the corrective action required and how SADCAS would verify implementation of corrective action.

4.1.4 Only on the positive recommendation of the assessment team and approval by the AAC can an organization be re-instated.

4.2 Suspension for Exceeding the Corrective Action Timeframe

4.2.1 An accredited facility may be placed on suspension if the deadline for submitting corrective actions has been exceeded. The deadline for submission of corrective actions is communicated to the accredited organization at the close-out meeting by the Team Leader on the Recommendation Report (SADCAS F 61 c).

4.3 Suspension for Non-payment of Fees

4.3.1 An accredited organization may be suspended for non-payment of fees on the recommendation of the Scheme Coordinator. The suspension period shall not exceed six months.

4.3.2 An accredited organization that has neither paid its fees nor made an alternative arrangement with the Finance and Administration Manager within 60 days of the date of the original invoice may be suspended thereafter.

4.3.3 Should an accredited organization pay all outstanding amounts during the suspension, the suspension will be lifted immediately.

4.3.4 Should an accredited organization fail to settle all outstanding amounts during the suspension period of six months, they may have their accreditation withdrawn. A new application with all associated costs will need to be submitted to SADCAS to be re-instated. The application shall also be treated as a new organization.

4.3.5 In addition to the above cost, the accredited organization shall be liable for the outstanding fees from their previous accreditation / compliant status prior to its application being processed.

4.3.6 An accredited organization shall not have their accreditation carried over into the next financial year should there be any outstanding fees owed to SADCAS.

4.4 **Suspension due to Change of Physical Location or Loss of Approved Signatories**

4.4.1 Accredited organizations that are due to change physical location, or are due to lose approved signatories are required to notify SADCAS at least four (4) weeks prior to any change.

4.4.2 A change in physical location may mean a change from one room to another or from one building to another. The accredited organization shall take into consideration the impact the change in location will have on its ability to produce reliable results.

4.4.3 Failure to notify SADCAS within the stated period will result in a penalty of 25% of the annual fee and possibly re-assessment by SADCAS.

4.4.4 In the case of change of location, the accredited organization will be required to go into suspension for a period not exceeding 6 months until they are able to verify their capability in line with their scope of accreditation. Records must contain evidence of acceptable comparative data from before and after the move. In addition, records of the checking of environmental conditions must be available.

4.4.5 In the case of loss of an approved technical signatory for a specific scope, the accredited organization shall not issue any certificate for that scope. Should the accredited organization have only one (1) signatory that covers its full scope, the organization shall notify SADCAS and go into voluntary suspension. The organization shall remain in suspension until SADCAS has verified the competence of any new proposed technical signatory for the relevant accredited scope.

5. **WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION**

5.1 Withdrawal of accreditation may be voluntary, in which case the organization is required to give SADCAS ninety (90) days' written notification based on whatever reason. This notice period may be decreased in exceptional circumstances by mutual agreement.

5.2 Decisions on enforced withdrawal of accreditation shall be made by the AAC on recommendation by the TM.

5.3 Withdrawal of accreditation may result from:

5.3.1 Failure of an organization to correct nonconformities as a result of an assessment or investigation of a complaint during the period of suspension and without a request for extension of suspension.

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- 5.3.2 Failure of an organization to settle outstanding fees during a suspension period and without a request for extension of suspension.
 - 5.3.3 Failure of an organization to demonstrate adequate verification of data during a period of suspension due to change of physical location and without a request for extension of suspension.
 - 5.3.4 The absence of technical signatories for the relevant scopes of accreditation which could not be rectified during the period of suspension.
 - 5.3.5 Failure of an organization to comply with the terms of the SADCAS F 44 - Accreditation Agreement.
 - 5.3.6 Where there is evidence of fraudulent behavior of the conformity assessment body intentionally provides false information or conceals information.

6. CONDITIONS OF SUSPENSION, REDUCTION OR WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

- 6.1 An accredited organization shall, upon suspension or withdrawal of SADCAS accreditation, immediately discontinue its use of any reference to its accreditation. In the case of partial suspension, reports shall clearly identify the scopes for which accreditation cannot be claimed. Failure to comply with this requirement is a criminal offence and can result in prosecution. (Refer to SADCAS TR 01: Part 1 and SADCAS TR 01: Part 2).
- 6.2 The CAB shall inform its affected clients of the suspension, reduction or withdrawal of its accreditation and the associated consequences without undue delay.
- 6.3 Once an accredited organization has been placed on suspension or its accreditation withdrawn for any reasons as stipulated in sections 4 and 5, the organization's certificate and schedule of accreditation will be removed from SADCAS website. SADCAS will update the accreditation status of the CAB on the SADCAS website including the applicable dates of the suspension or withdrawal of the affected scope(s). The withdrawal status of the CAB will be shown on the website for a period of 3 months after which all details of the CAB will be removed.
- 6.4 An organization may not be in suspension for longer than six months.... Failure to address the cause(s) of suspension within six months may result in withdrawal of accreditation resulting in the facility having to re-apply for accreditation as a new applicant with the associated costs and penalties. (Refer to SADCAS AP 02 - SADCAS Service fees).
- 6.5 All costs associated with affecting a suspension shall be for the account of the facility. Facilities remain liable for all fees whilst in suspension. If withdrawal of accreditation has occurred within the first six months of the financial year (i.e. before September) and if they have not been assessed yet in the current financial year, then a pro-rata percentage of their annual fees are still due to SADCAS.

- 6.6 SADCAS do not refund any fee or part thereof to facilities that have been suspended or whose accreditation has been withdrawn.

7 RE-INSTATEMENT OF SUSPENDED ORGANIZATIONS

- 7.3 Once an organization has satisfactorily addressed the issues which resulted in suspension of accreditation, accreditation may be re-instated on approval by the TM or AAC depending on the reason (s) for suspension.
- 7.4 A facility that is in suspension may be required to have an on-site assessment. A positive recommendation is required prior to re-instatement of accreditation. The extent of this assessment will be determined by the TM based on the reasons placed into suspension and the associated risk. All costs will be for the account of the facility.
- 7.5 Prior to re-instatement, the TM shall notify the Financial Administration Unit of the re-instatement in order to ensure that all outstanding fees have been paid.
- 7.6 Re-instatement after withdrawal of accreditation will require the organization to re-apply for accreditation and the entire process followed as for a new application. The previous accreditation number will remain obsolete and the organization will be issued with a new SADCAS accreditation.
- 7.7 Notification of re-instatement will be sent to the organization detailing the scope that the re-instatement applies to.
- 7.8 The organization's details and certificate will be restored on the SADCAS website.

8 REFERENCES

- SADCAS F 44 - SADCAS Accreditation Agreement
- SADCAS F 61 (c) - Assessment Recommendation Report
- SADCAS AP 02 - SADCAS Service Fees
- SADCAS TR 01: Part 1 - Conditions for the use of SADCAS Accreditation Symbol
- SADCAS TR 02: Part 2 - Use of Combined Accreditation Symbol and ILAC MRA/IAF MLA Mark

APPENDIX – AMENDMENT RECORD

Revision Status	Change			Approved by	Effective Date
	Page	Clause/ Sub clause	Description of Change		
Issue 1	1		Title: Added <u>“REDUCTION, WITHDRAWAL”</u> between <u>“Suspension”</u> and <u>“Reinstatement”</u>		
		3.1.1	<u>Lines 2 and 4: Deleted “Facilities” and substituted with “accredited organizations”</u>		
		2.2	<u>New clause added: “Reduction of Accreditation: Accreditation is cancelled for part of the scope of accreditation.</u>		
		4.1.1	<u>Lines 2: Deleted “Facility” and substituted with “an accredited organization”</u>		
	4	4.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Line 2: Deleted “Facility” and substituted with “an accredited organization”</u> • <u>Line 3: “Lead Assessor” deleted and substituted with “Team Leader”</u> 		
		4.3	<u>For all sub-clauses: Deleted “Facility” and substituted with “organization”</u>		
		4.4.1	<u>Line 1: Added “accredited” before “organizations”</u>		
		4.4.2	<u>Line 2: Added “accredited” before “organizations”</u>		
	5	4.4.4	<u>Line 1: Added “accredited” before “organizations”</u>		
		4.4.5	<u>Lines 1 and 2: Added “accredited” before “organizations”</u>		
		6	<u>Added “REDUCTION” between “SUSPENSION” and “WITHDRAWAL”</u>		
		6.1	<u>Line 2: Added “discontinue its use of any reference to its accreditation” after “immediately”</u>		
		6.2	<u>New clause added: discontinue its use of any reference to its accreditation. Subsequent clauses renumbered</u>		

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	Page	Clause/ Sub clause	Description of Change		
	6	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line 1: Added “accredited” before “organization” Line 2: “details” deleted and substituted by “certificate and schedule of accreditation” Added: “SADCAS will update the accreditation status of the CAB on the SADCAS website including the applicable dates of the suspension or withdrawal and affected scope(s). The withdrawal status of the CAB will be shown on the website for a period of 3 months after which all details of the CAB will be removed.” 		
Issue 2	6	New Subclause 5.3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added new subclause which reads “Where there is evidence of fraudulent behavior of the conformity assessment body intentionally provides false information or conceals information” 	CEO	2019-03-04
Issue 3	4	3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added new subclause which reads “Suspended organisations are required to submit an action plan/programme of action to SADCAS indicating actions (with timelines) to be taken to address reasons for suspension. SADCAS shall evaluate the plan and monitor to ensure that a decision on reinstatement is made before the end of suspension period”. 	CEO	2023-09-22
		4.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted “Financial Administrator” and substituted with “Scheme Coordinator” Added “. The suspension period shall not exceed six months” at the end of the paragraph. 		

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	Page	Clause/ Sub clause	Description of Change		
Issue 3	5	4.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted "3 months" and substituted with "6 months". 	CEO	2023-09-22
		4.4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added "for a period not exceeding 6 months" 		
	6	6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause amended to read "An organization may not be in suspension for longer than six months. Failure to address the cause(s) of suspension within six months may result in withdrawal of accreditation resulting in the facility having to re-apply for accreditation as a new applicant..." 		