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ACB Certification Bodies
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The Scheme for the Accreditation of Certification Bodies (The ACB Scheme)
ACB CIRCULAR 1/2020

**MANAGEMENT OF ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

1. Introduction

Due to the classification of COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020 and the announcement of Movement Control Order (MCO) by the Prime Minister of Malaysia on 16 March 2020, Department of Standards Malaysia (Standards Malaysia) published Accreditation Circular 1/2020 – Standards Malaysia’s Precautionary Measures to Prevent the Transmission of the *Coronavirus* (COVID-19). The circular aimed to provide general guidance of the management of accreditation activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and MCO.

Taking into consideration international and regional practices, the Scheme for the Accreditation of Certification Bodies (ACB) decided to publish a circular to further explain ACB’s policy to provide clarity to its applicant/accredited Certification Bodies (CBs).

This circular applies to all CBs accredited by Standards Malaysia.

2. Objective

This circular is aimed to inform all applicant/accredited CBs under ACB with regards to management of accreditation and certification activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This circular complements Accreditation Circular 1/2020.

3. Requirements

A. Accredited Certification Bodies

i. Conduct of Office Assessment

- a. To the extent possible, Standards Malaysia will conduct assessments remotely.

- b. Where remote assessment is not possible, on-site assessments will be conducted with caution where suitable Personal protective Equipment (PPE) will be worn, good hand hygiene and appropriate social distancing. Where meals are provided, to the extent possible, avoid sharing of food.
- c. Depending on the situation, special audits may be conducted remotely.

ii. Arrangement of Witnessing Assessments

- a. Where the CB conducts remote audit, Standards Malaysia shall witness 1/3 of the witness audits for the year.
- b. Standards Malaysia may consider record review to replace witnessing assessments whereby the CB shall provide the audit plan, auditor's competency record and final audit report.

B. Applicant Certification Bodies

i. Documentation Review

- a. To the extent possible, Standards Malaysia will conduct documentation review off-site.

ii. Compliance Assessment

- a. Compliance assessment shall be conducted on-site.

iii. Witnessing Assessment

- a. Witnessing assessment shall be conducted on-site.
- b. Standards Malaysia may consider remote witnessing assessment if the audit is conducted remotely.

C. Standards Malaysia's Procedure for Remote Assessment

- i. The CB to shall fill in AF 117-1 which is downloadable from <http://www.jsm.gov.my/application-form>
- ii. The CB to ensure that documented information provided is available in digital format (e.g. Word, PDF, scans, screenshots)
- iii. Where video conference applications are utilized:
 - a. The CB to arrange the use of the video conference application. If software needs to be download in advanced, the instructions are to be provided to the assessment team prior to the assessment,
 - b. The CB is advised to perform a system check (e.g. connection, video, sound, etc.) prior to the actual assessment date to minimize potential glitches during the assessment, and
 - c. The CB to prepare back-up in case of technical issues.

D. Guidelines for Certification Bodies conducting Remote Audit

- i. Standards Malaysia shall verify the effectiveness of the use of remote audit by the certification bodies especially on the following:
 - a. Communication to clients on remote audit
 - b. The CB's remote audit procedure

- c. Training records to personnel on remote audit procedure

4. Implementation

- a. Implementation of this circular takes immediate effect from the date of publication of this circular until further notice.
- b. Failure to comply with the above may result in suspension of Standards Malaysia accreditation.
- c. Please contact the ACB Scheme Manager or the Director of Accreditation if you would like to seek further clarification on this circular.

Approved by,

Director of Accreditation
Department of Standards Malaysia

Date: 3 June 2020