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**SRI LANKA STANDARDS INSTITUTION**  
**MSCS PROCEDURE**  
**PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS OR CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING**  
**CLIENTS OF SLSI AND THEIR CUSTOMERS**

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**1. PURPOSE**

This procedure describes the policy of Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI) on management of extra ordinary events or circumstances affecting clients of SLSI and their customers. It also describes actions to be taken by SLSI as well as its clients at a situation where it is beyond the control of both parties preventing access for carrying out onsite audits and to comply with certification requirements.

**2. SCOPE**

This procedure is applicable in extra ordinary event or circumstances to manage certification activities.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

**3.1 DG**

Director General of SLSI

**3.2 D(SC)**

Director (Systems Certification)

**3.3 SDD(SC)**

Senior Deputy Director (Systems Certification) of SLSI

**3.4 MSCOs**

Management Systems Certification Officers

**3.5 Extraordinary event or circumstance:** A circumstance beyond the control of the organization, 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.

**3.6 Remote Audit**

The facilitation of audit of a certification Body from a location other than that being physically present.

**4. REFERENCES**

- 4.1. Management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting RvA accredited bodies and their customers (RvA-T051-UK, Version 4, 2020-04-07)
- 4.2. IAF Informative Document For Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations ( IAF ID 3 : 2011)
- 4.3. Principles on Remote Assessment (IAF ID 12: 2015)
- 4.4. SLAB Policy on management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting SLAB accredited bodies and their customers (AC-RG(P)- 20 : 2020-03-18)
- 4.5. MSC R 10.2 – 01 - Risk Assessment Report

**5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 DG shall approve the extension/certification/ suspension/ reduction of scope recommended by the D(SC)
- 5.2 D(SC) shall recommend extension/certification/ suspension/ reduction of scope.
- 5.3 SDD(SC) shall recommend extension/certification/ suspension/ reduction of scope due to the extra ordinary events or circumstances after carrying out the review of current situation.
- 5.4 MSCOs shall communicate with clients and obtain all required information and organize remote audits based on the extra ordinary events or circumstances.

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**6. PROCEDURE**

- 6.1. Each certified client shall immediately inform SLSI about the extraordinary event or circumstance that could affect their certification process. The client shall provide any information needed by SLSI on request.
- 6.2. SLSI shall communicate with all its affected clients with information on the postponement/ rescheduling/ cancellation of audits and extension for the existing certification. The decision on postponement/ rescheduling/ cancellation of audits and extension for the existing certification shall comply with the requirements of accreditation bodies of SLSI and IAF Guidelines.
- 6.3. MSCOs shall communicate with affected clients and assess and understand the current and expected future situation of clients. Following necessary information should gather before deciding on an appropriate cause of action.
- a) When will the client be able to function normally?
  - b) When will the client be able to perform the service defined within the current scope of certification?
  - c) Will the client need to use alternative sites of manufacturing, distribution or provision of services? If so, are these currently covered under the current certification or will they need to be evaluated?
  - d) If the client is certified to a management system standard that requires a disaster recovery plan or emergency response plan, has the client implemented the plan and was it effective?
  - e) To what extent has operation of the management system been affected?

For each case affected by an extraordinary event or circumstance, SDD shall evaluate the risks presented to SLSI and to the certification concerned (MSC R 10.2 – 01) based on the above information. At the first instance it will be necessary to evaluate the extent of any impact of the situation on the ability of the client to continue to operate in accordance with the certification requirements. SDD shall consider the extent of the impact on the client to determine whether it is possible for certification to be maintained under the circumstances.

Records of the above shall be maintained as per the format MSC - F 6.5 - 02 in the Project File of each affected client.

- 6.4 MSCO shall discuss the above with the relevant SDD and decide the following;
- a) If the risk of continuation with the certification is low, SLSI shall request relevant documentation (for example: management review meeting minutes, corrective action records, results of internal audits, test/inspection reports, etc.) to be reviewed off site by SLSI to determine continuing suitability of the certification (on a short-term basis only). During this process following aspects shall be fulfilled;
    - i. Proactive communication between the affected client and SLSI
    - ii. Steps that will be taken by SLSI to assess the affected client and how the plan to move forward will be communicated.
    - iii. Specifying the maximum time period for an alternative short-term auditing method that could be used before suspension or withdrawal of certification
    - iv. Criteria for renewing normal oversight, including the method and timing of any reinstatement activities and audits.
    - v. Possible amendments to client's oversight plans on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with SLSI procedures.
    - vi. Ensuring that any deviation from SLSI requirements is justified and documented, and agreement on plans to address temporary deviations from requirements.
    - vii. Re-establishment of surveillance/recertification activities according to SLSI oversight plans when access to the affected location is re-established.

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- b) SDD shall maintain following information of affected clients in the format MSC - F 6.5 – 03;
- i. Scope and extent of the affected services and business areas and sites
  - ii. Number of affected clients
  - iii. When SLSI will be able to function normally within the current scope of accreditation
  - iv. Alternative auditing methods which will be applied like e.g. remote assessments (IAF MD 4) or desktop reviews of documents submitted
  - v. Alternative programs planned to maintain confidence in the client's systems during the period that access cannot be gained
  - vi. Planning of the re-establishment of the regular oversight activities according to SLSI oversight plans when the normal situation is restored.
- c) If contact with the client cannot be made or not providing any justified action plan to address temporary deviation from certification requirements/ regulatory requirements/ and procedures relevant to its own sites/branch office /outsourcing bodies, the SLSI shall follow normal processes and procedures for suspension and withdrawal of certification.

6.5 When developing alternate short-term methods of audits, SLSI shall take into consideration the following limitations:

**6.5.1 Initial Certification & Scope extensions**

- a) Initial certification and extension of existing scopes can only be operated when the full planned audit and appraisal is possible as in such cases it is not possible to support a certification decision with existing information originating from previous oversight activities.
- b) Therefore, during a period when due to extraordinary events or circumstances, on site operation and auditing is not possible, initial certification and scope extension is only possible if all above mentioned activities can be done remotely in a satisfactory manner.

**6.5.2 Surveillance activities**

- a) Surveillance activities must be completed as quickly as possible once the emergency status has been lifted and as soon as the normal situation and operation is restored. Wherever possible the surveillance must take place within the current certification year. Subsequent surveillance activities shall continue in line with the original program.
- b) In case of the first surveillance audit after initial certification, a postponement of the audit shall not exceed 6 months (18 months from date of initial certification).
- c) In case of subsequent surveillance audits a postponement of the audit shall not exceed 6 months.
- d) Extended periods between surveillance visits as specified above may result in a need for additional surveillance visits for the remainder of the certification cycle.
- e) During postponement SLSI shall consider other means of monitoring that may be available such as remote assessments (refer to IAF MD 4), desktop reviews of documentation submitted or other methods.

**6.5.3 Re-certification**

- a) If based on information gathered, there is sufficient documented proof to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective, SLSI may consider to extend the certification for a period not exceeding 6 months beyond the original expiry date.
- b) If the recertification assessment cannot be undertaken within 6 months, the certificate should be suspended. In this case the regular policy of SLSI will be applicable for suspension.

**6.6 Recommendation & Approval for continuation of certification**

6.6.1 SDD shall discuss the findings with D(SC) and make the recommendation to DDG and forwarded to DG's approval based on the findings. Extension of certification shall be approved by the Director General of SLSI.