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NAB-MALTA

TECHNICAL GUIDE

ATG17 - Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances


Policy of the NAB-MALTA

Revision 0 June 2020

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FOREWORD

Accreditation is the process which gives assurance to customers that Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) including laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies, validation and verification bodies, reference materials producers and providers of proficiency testing schemes, are competent to perform specific conformity assessment activities.

The National Accreditation Board - Malta (NAB-MALTA) is the single national accreditation body appointed as per Article 4 of Regulation (EC) 765/2008 with responsibility for accreditation in accordance with the relevant normative documents. It operates a management system which complies with the requirements established in EN ISO/IEC 17011.

International trade relies on certificates and reports issued by competent bodies. Confidence in certificates and reports is achieved by accreditation. Accreditation is based upon a series of confidence building steps between accreditation bodies and CAB's, and the subsequent assurance given by NABs that the CABs continuously maintain and enhance their competence. This assurance is achieved through on-site assessments and regular accreditation activities.


The services of the NAB-MALTA are accessible to all applicants whose requests fall within the current activities offered by the NAB-MALTA. Access is not conditional upon the size of the applicant CAB or membership of any association or group.

For the scope of this guide, the masculine gender shall also refer to the feminine gender.

SCOPE OF PUBLICATION

This publication has been drawn up to outline the NAB-MALTA Policy on management of extraordinary events or circumstances. It is based on the requirements of EN ISO/IEC17011:2017 and the principles of IAF ID12:2015.

This is a mandatory document which will come into effect from the 17th June 2020.

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1. PURPOSE


- 1.1 This publication outlines the NAB-MALTA policy when extraordinary events or circumstances prevent the conformity assessment bodies (CABs) to conduct conformity assessment activities according to the defined systems, programs or schemes. These policies apply for example when these events or circumstances prevent the CAB from accessing locations or objects of clients for inspections, testing or calibration activities, or when these events or circumstances directly affect the CAB's ability to operate.
- 1.2 The publication also explains the general policy of the NAB-MALTA in the case that events or circumstances prevent the NAB-MALTA from conducting accreditation activities according to regular procedures.

2. DEFINITIONS

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. (Source: IAF ID 3: 2011)

3. GENERAL POLICY

- 3.1 For each situation affected by an extraordinary event or circumstance, the CAB shall evaluate the risks presented to the organization and to the conformity assessment activities concerned, considering at least the following:
- The safety and health of the persons involved;
 - The possibility to achieve the objectives of the conformity assessment activities;
 - The validity of alternative conditions and methods;
 - Requirements of regulators and scheme owners (if applicable);
 - The requirements of the applicable accreditation standard concerning the communication to the clients and recording and reporting changes in the methods.
- 3.2 In the first instance it will be necessary to evaluate the extent of any impact of the situation on the ability of the accredited CAB to continue to operate in accordance with the accreditation requirements.

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- 3.3 CABs that have to deal with an extraordinary event or circumstance that could affect the accreditation status shall inform the NAB-MALTA of the existence of this event or circumstance immediately.
- 3.4 Furthermore the CAB shall be able to provide the following information on request of the NAB-MALTA:
- Extent of the affected services;
 - Number of affected clients;
 - When the CAB will be able to function normally within the current scope of accreditation (when the normal situation is restored);
 - Any other necessary information.
- 3.5 The CAB shall maintain full records of actions, evaluations and deviations from its original way of working, together with the rationale behind decisions and actions taken. These records shall be made available to the NAB-MALTA for review upon demand.

4. CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT REQUIRED BY LAW

- 4.1 Where the conformity assessment is required by law, the extraordinary event or circumstance may result in a situation that the CAB's client and/or the CAB itself cannot comply with legal requirements. In this case, the CAB should contact the responsible authorities for guidance and instructions on the conformity assessment activities. The regulators are expected to take the lead in development of guidance and instructions in case of an extraordinary event or circumstance.

5. ROLE OF SCHEME OWNERS

- 5.1 Where the CAB operates a scheme from an external scheme owner, the CAB should follow the decisions of the scheme owner on how to deal with the extraordinary event or circumstance. The external scheme owners are expected to take the lead in development of guidance and instructions in case of an extraordinary event or circumstance.
- 5.2 If the extraordinary event of circumstance has an effect on the possibility to comply with the requirements of the conformity assessment scheme, the CAB should contact the scheme owner for guidance on the fulfilment of requirements.

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6. ACCREDITATION OF CABS

6.1 An extraordinary event or circumstance affecting the CAB or laboratory may temporarily prevent the NAB-MALTA from carrying out planned assessments on-site. Possible actions that can be considered include:

- postponement of planned assessments
- implementation of alternative assessment methods for e.g. remote assessments (refer to **ATG09**) or desktop reviews of documents.

6.2 Initial assessment and scope extension:

6.2.1 Initial accreditation assessments and assessments for scope extensions that can be carried out entirely remotely can proceed if there is consent of all parties involved.

6.2.2 If an on-site assessment is necessary these assessments will not be conducted and will be postponed.

6.3 Surveillance activities

6.3.1 Surveillance activities will be completed as quickly as possible once the emergency status has been lifted and as soon as the normal situation and operation is restored. As assessments should be performed on-site at least every two years postponement of the assessment should not be such that this period is exceeded.

6.3.2 Extended periods between surveillance assessments as specified above may result in a need for additional surveillance assessment activities for the remainder of the accreditation cycle.

6.3.3. During a period when, due to exceptional circumstances, an on-site assessment is not possible the NAB-MALTA will consider alternative means of monitoring that may be available such as remote assessments, desktop reviews of documents submitted or other methods.

6.4 Reassessment

6.4.1 An accreditation cycle cannot be longer than five years. Postponement of the assessment shall not be such that this period is exceeded.

6.4.2 Within this limit the NAB-MALTA can consider alternative means of monitoring that may be available such as remote assessments, desktop reviews of documents submitted or other methods.

END