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PURPOSE

This document outlines the EA policy for accreditation bodies when processing accreditation to certification bodies in the field of food safety management systems (FSMS). It specifies how to use categories for scopes and rules for witnessing for accreditation against ISO/IEC 17021 in combination with ISO/TS 22003

Authorship

The publication has been written by the EA Certification Committee.

Official language

The text may be translated into other languages as required. The English language version remains the definitive version.

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CONTENTS

1	SCOPE	4
2	DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION	4
3	CRITERIA FOR INCLUDING A PARTICULAR CATEGORY IN THE ACCREDITATION SCOPE	4
4	PROCESS FOR GRANTING OR EXTENDING THE SCOPE	5
4.1	Witnessing	5
4.2	Criteria for the selection of audit to be witnessed	5
4.3	Influence of other accreditations	6

1 SCOPE

This document is intended to outline policy for accreditation bodies to determine the approach to the accreditation of certification bodies seeking accreditation to certify Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) such as ISO22000.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation assessments shall be against ISO/IEC 17021 including the requirements of ISO/TS 22003. The accreditation document (certificate or scope) shall explicitly state that the accreditation is against ISO/IEC 17021 and ISO/TS 22003. Accreditation bodies shall not grant accreditation to certify FSMS with any other standard.

The Scope of accreditation shall be expressed according to one or more of the Categories detailed in Annex A Table A.1 of ISO/TS 22003.

3 CRITERIA FOR INCLUDING A PARTICULAR CATEGORY IN THE ACCREDITATION SCOPE

Accreditation for one or more Categories (Annex A Table A.1) confirms that the certification body has demonstrated competence to deliver certification for FSMS (e.g. ISO22000) in those Categories.

However it does not mean that the certification body has auditors with the competence needed in all the Sectors that may be included in such Categories (see ISO/TS 22003 clause 7.2.4.6.3). For this reason before granting accreditation for a specific Category, the accreditation body shall assess that:

- a) The certification body has competent personnel to perform the contract review and select the correct Category (see 7.2.2 in ISO/TS 22003)
- b) The certification body has defined Sectors inside each Category. These Sectors shall include, as a minimum, those included in Table A.1 in Annex A in ISO/TS 22003.
- c) The certification body has established technical criteria to describe the competence for auditors in each Sector (see Annex A Table A.1 and clause 7.2.4 in ISO/TS 22003)
- d) The certification body has competent auditors in at least one Sector of the Category
- e) The certification body has established a process giving assurance that accredited certification will be offered only in Sectors where the certification body has competent auditors.
- f) The certification body keeps an updated list of the Sectors in which it has competent auditors. This list shall be available to the accreditation body on demand.
- g) The certification body must be able to demonstrate that it has at least one active application in the Category for which it is seeking accreditation. The certification body has established the procedure to handle applications for new Sectors included in a Category (when the certification body does not already have competent auditors in that sector).

4 PROCESS FOR GRANTING OR EXTENDING THE SCOPE

Table A.1 in Annex A in ISO/TS 22003 may be condensed in the following clusters¹:

1. Farming (A+B)
2. Food and Feed Processing (C+D+E+F)
3. Distribution, Transport and Storage (H+J)
4. Catering (G)
5. (Bio) Chemicals (L)
6. Auxiliary Industries (I+K+M)

4.1 Witnessing

The accreditation body shall not grant accreditation for a given Category without at least one witnessing visit performed in the cluster. This is to say that if a certification body asks, for example, for accreditation for Categories B and D, the accreditation body has to perform two witnessing visits. If the certification body asks for accreditation for C and E, one witnessing visit may be enough.

This criteria is also applicable to extension of scopes. For extensions inside a Cluster, witnessing is not mandatory. Witnessing is mandatory for extensions to Categories in a new Cluster.

These requirements are **minimum** requirements (except for the cases described in 4.3). The accreditation body has to assess every individual case and decide if more witnessing is needed in specific situations.

The accreditation body has to witness at least one audit in Cluster 2 (if covered by the accredited scope of the certification body) as part of each surveillance or re-assessment and at least one audit in each of the other clusters during the accreditation cycle.

A single witness audit could encompass different categories if the activities of the witnessed company and of the certification body justify it.

4.2 Criteria for the selection of audit to be witnessed

For the initial accreditation and for the re-assessment of the certification body in one or more Categories, a witness of an initial certification audit, including stage 1, is highly recommended. At least one of the witness audits per accreditation cycle should include a stage 1 audit.

Wherever feasible, throughout its accreditation cycle, the accreditation body should ensure that witness assessments are performed in those sectors (from those covered by the certification body scope) with the higher risks of food safety hazards. The accreditation body may take into account other accredited certification activity in the same category (see clause 4.3).

It is preferable that the accreditation body witnesses an audit team that has not been witnessed previously in that particular field of competence.

¹ These clusters are established only for the accreditation process and are not appropriate to be used by certification bodies in their certification processes

Witness assessments shall avoid the repeated witnessing of the same certification body client company.

Accreditation bodies shall take into account previous results of witnessing to establish its witness strategy.

4.3 Influence of other accreditations

The accreditation body should take into account accreditation granted to the certification body in other food safety standards for categories in the same cluster when deciding which witness assessments need to be performed. In these cases the accreditation body may use witnessing performed in one of such schemes to substitute some, but not the majority, of the witness assessment activity required in 4.1. These cases shall be fully documented and justified by the accreditation body.