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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is intended to support the consistent application of certification requirements in the event of Extra Ordinary Events or Circumstances affecting RSB Certification services or its Certified Clients
- 1.2 It is also called into force when extraordinary events or circumstances prevent the RSB certification services to conduct audit and evaluation activities according to the defined systems, programs or schemes
- 1.3 This Policy provides information regarding actions to be taken by RSB and its certified clients in the event of any situation preventing access to RSB certified clients, such that planned
- 1.4 cannot take place.
- 1.5 These situations include events preventing access to certified clients, general access to a geographical area (including critical locations). The situations also include events directly affecting RSBs' ability to operate normally, as may be guided by applicable Laws, Government Circulars or RSB Human Resource Policy.
- 1.6 These policies apply for example when these events or circumstances prevent the RSB to access locations or objects of clients for audits or evaluations, or when these events or circumstances directly affect the RSBs' ability to operate normally.

2. **Scope:** the policy is primarily applicable for management systems and product certification.

3.0 References

- 3.1 IAF Informative Document IAF ID 3: 2011 "Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations".
- 3.2 RvA-T051-UK Version 5, 07 May 2020 Management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting RvA accredited bodies and their customers
- 3.3 IAF MD 4:2018 "*IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes*"

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4.0 Terms and Definitions

4.1 Certified Client

Organization whose Management System has been certified.

(Source: ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015)

In the context of this Policy, this pertains to all bodies certified by RSB CB.

4.2 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).*

5.0 RSB required actions to be taken by Certified Clients

5.1 For each case where a certified client has been affected by an extraordinary event or circumstance, the certified client shall conduct an evaluation on the extent of any impact of the situation on its ability to continue to operate in accordance with the certification requirements, detailing:

- a) The Scope and extent of the affected services and products, business areas, and sites;
- b) The Number of affected customers;
- c) To what extent has operation of the management system been affected?
- d) Whether the organization will need to use alternative manufacturing and/or distribution sites? If so, are these currently covered under the certification or will they need to be evaluated
- e) When the certified client will be able to function normally within the current scope of certification;
- f) When the organization will be able to ship products or perform the service defined within the current scope of certification? or will they need to be evaluated?
- g) Alternative programs planned to maintain confidence in the certified client's systems;
- h) whether the existing inventory still meets customer specifications or will the certified organization contact its customers regarding possible concessions?
- i) whether the certified client has implemented emergency response plan effectively
- j) whether some of the processes are, or need to be subcontracted to other organizations,

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and if so, what controls have been put in place;

- k) alternative sampling sites, as appropriate
 - l) whether an impact assessment has been conducted to include as a minimum;
 - Key changes since the last audit e.g. HACCP plans, product recalls and significant complaint levels.
 - Status with regard to objectives and key process performance, management review and internal audits. It is expected that certified organizations increase the frequency of internal audits in support of the FSMS and to ensure food safety.
 - Pending compliance activities / legal proceedings.
 - Whether the organization is operating to the scope of certification.
 - Any changes to processes or services outsourced following the extra ordinary events or circumstances.
 - supply chain of the organization and the potential impact on resources and food safety.
- 5.2 The outcome of the review shall be recorded and be made available for auditing by RSB on demand.

6.0 Actions to be taken by the RSB

6.1 Where operations of RSB certification services are affected by extraordinary event or circumstances, the policy NCD/POL/13 and procedures on remote auditing shall apply.

6.2 RSB gather necessary information from the certified organization to assess the risk for continuing certification and determine whether it is possible for certification to be maintained under the extraordinary event or circumstances,

6.2.1 If the risk of continuing certification is determined to be low

Alternative short-term methods of assessment to verify continuing system effectiveness for the organization will be used such as requesting relevant documentation (management review meeting minutes, corrective action records, results of internal audits, test/inspection reports) to be reviewed off site by the certification services to determine continuing suitability of the certification for not more than 6 months.

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For certified organizations with the right infrastructure remote audits NCD/POL/13 will be used
If contact with the certified client cannot be made, RSB CB shall follow normal processes and procedures for suspension and withdrawal of certification.

6.3 Initial certification and scope extensions

8.3.1 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.

8.3.2 Theoretically it might be possible to conduct all these activities off-site.

8.3.3 Therefore, during a period when due to extraordinary 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.

6.4 Surveillance activities (if applicable)

6.4.1 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 should continue in line with the original program.

6.4.2 In case of the first surveillance audit after initial certification, a postponement of the audit should not exceed 6 months (18 months from date of initial certification).

6.4.3 In case of subsequent surveillance audits a postponement of the audit should not exceed 6 months.

6.4.4 Extended periods between surveillance visits as specified above may result in a need for additional surveillance visits for the remainder of the certification cycle.

6.4.5 During postponement of audits RSB may use ICT means of monitoring that may be available such as remote assessments or desktop reviews of documentation submitted or other methods

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6.5 Re-certification

6.5.1 If based on information gathered by the certification body, there is sufficient documented proof to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective, then RSB may consider to extend the certification for a period not exceeding 6 months beyond the original expiry date.

6.5.2 If the recertification assessment cannot be undertaken within 6 months, the certificate shall be suspended. In this case the regular policy of RSB in case of suspension and the certification contract will be applicable.



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Director General

