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|  | <h1>Quality Management System - Manual</h1> | Departments:<br>All departments | Doc No:<br>QP10  |
|   |   | Issue Date:<br>2022-12-02       | Issue No.<br>1.1 |
|   | CH 7.Procedure: Certification Process       | Effective Date:<br>2022-12-09   |                  |

## GRANTING, MAINTAINING, EXTENDING, OR REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION, AND FOR SUSPENDING, WITHDRAWING, OR REFUSING CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

### 1. Purpose

To describe a procedure for granting, for maintaining, for extending, or for reducing the scope of accreditation; and for suspending, for withdrawing or for refusing certification.

### 2. Scope

This procedure covers all types of product certification services provided by **Partner Africa**

- 2.1 Receipt and review of evaluation reports
- 2.2 Granting of certificate for the product
- 2.3 Maintaining a certificate for the product
- 2.4 Extending certificate for the product
- 2.5 Reducing the scope of the certification
- 2.6 Suspension, and withdrawals or cancellation of certificates
- 2.7 Conditions for Suspension or cancellation of certified clients
- 2.8 Refusing certification

### 3. Definitions & References

3.1 *Definition (Emphasis text looks like this [Heading 3])*  
None

3.2 *References*  
GlobalG.A.P – general Regulations – Rules for Certification Bodies

### 4. Responsibility

- 4.1 **Certification Committee** is responsible for granting, for maintaining, for extending, or reducing the scope of accreditation. The **Certification Committee** is also responsible for suspending, withdrawing or for refusing certification. For all routine activities, **Scheme Manager** is supported by the support staff. **Scheme Manager** submits to the client the certificate for the product certified, after receipt of approval of the certificate by **Head of Audits**.
- 4.2 **Head of Audits** is responsible for approval / authorization of certificate of product.

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## 5. Description of Activity

### 5.1 *Receipt and review of evaluation report*

- 5.1.1 Evaluation team submits the evaluation documents / reports to the **Scheme Manager**, upon completion of evaluation.
- 5.1.2 All such documents are reviewed by **Scheme Manager** for the completeness of the documents as well as signature of the evaluation team.
- 5.1.3 **Scheme Manager** reviews the completed evaluation checklist / records and supportive documents submitted by evaluators.
- 5.1.4 If required, **Scheme Manager** may consult with the **Technical Experts** or **Evaluators** for such review.
- 5.1.5 Based on review of evaluation records, decision for the issue of certificate for the product is taken subject to closure of the nonconformities / observations issued during the evaluation.

### 5.2 *Granting of certificate for the product*

- 5.2.1 Upon receipt of corrective actions from the client against the nonconformities / observations, the corrective actions are verified by evaluation team. Based on the recommendation of the evaluation team for closure of the nonconformities / observations, report is prepared. The evaluation report along with the corrective actions and recommendation of evaluation team is put in the **Certification committee** for review and approval.
- 5.2.1 Meeting of **Certification committee** is held at every 15 days. During the meeting, all the evaluation records are verified; and upon successful verification, the **Certification committee** decides for granting the certificate for the identified product.
- 5.2.2 Based on the recommendation of the certification committee, **Scheme Manager** prepares certificate with all the relevant information related to the product.
- 5.2.3 Upon completion of the certificate, the same is given to the **Head of Audits** for approval.
- 5.2.4 Product certificate (all the content as mentioned in clause no. 7.7 of Quality Manual) is issued to the client after approval of the **Head of Audits**.

### 5.3 *Maintaining certificate for the product*

- 5.3.1 For maintaining the certification of the product, periodic surveillance audit is conducted as per the details given in QP09 for periodic evaluation.
- 5.3.2 Based on the successful periodic evaluation, the product certification remains maintained till the next periodic evaluation.

### 5.4 *Extending certificate for the product*

- 5.4.1 The certificate may be extended in the following circumstances:
- Evaluation is already done in time, but due to heavy workload, it is not possible to review evaluation documents by **Certification committee**.
  - Head of Audits** may not be available for approval of the certificate.
  - Due some other unavoidable circumstances.
- 5.4.2 Based on any of the above situations, the decision for extending the certificate is taken by **Head of Audits** in consultation with the **Scheme Manager** and extension letter is prepared and issued to the client with the reference to the certificate number.
- 5.4.3 All such extension is given for a period of three months from the expiry date of the certificate.

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**5.5 Reducing the scope of certification**

5.5.1 Reduction in the scope of certification is possible in the below circumstances:

- Any of the product from the present certification may fail to comply with the relevant requirements.
- Client requires voluntarily withdrawal of the product from the present certificate.
- Due to some other unavoidable circumstances.

5.5.2 Based on above, decision for the scope reduction is taken and scope of certification is reduced by removal of the product (as identified), and the revised certificate is sent for the approval of **Head of Audits** with the reason for the reduction in the scope of certification. Certificate is then issued to the client after approval of the **Head of Audits** with the date of issue.

**5.6 Suspension, and withdrawal or cancellation of certificates**

5.6.1 This instruction covers suspension procedures through withdrawal or cancellation of the certificate and revision of the register of certified clients for the identified products. Also take into consideration **GR-Rules for Certification Bodies ver. 6.0 clause 8.2 Producers non-conformance and sanctions**

- brought to the attention of the **Scheme Manager**, who reviews the information and communicate the information to the **Certification Committee**.
- If the **Certification Committee** decides to proceed, the certified client must reply to **Partner Africa** within fifteen days of receipt of letter.
- If the **Scheme Manager** determines that the action or position contained in the certified client response is satisfactory, a letter is issued this and communicated to the certified client.
- If actions are required, due dates must be set and **Scheme Manager** must review the actions at those times to ensure that they are effectively completed in order to prevent suspension or cancellation.
- If the certified client does not reply in fifteen days, if the reply is not satisfactory, or if the actions required are not effectively completed in the allowed time, the **Scheme Manager** communicates the information to the Certification Committee who determines whether to suspend or cancel certification.
- If the decision by the **Certification Committee** is made to cancel certification, the **Scheme Manager** is responsible for suspending the certified client or canceling the certified client from the Register of Certified Clients, advising the certified client and publicizing the cancellation on the website as guided by GlobalG.A.P requirements if necessary.

5.6.2 The following reasons but not limited to below are considered as grounds for suspension or cancellation:

- Major nonconformance(s) or effective corrective action not implemented within a specified time.
- Improper use of the certificate, symbol, or logo not remedied to the satisfaction of **Partner Africa**.
- Certified client ceases to supply services of the certified quality for an extended period of time.
- Certified client persistently fails to meet any of the requirements for certification, including requirements for the effectiveness.

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- Certified client fails to meet financial obligations to **Partner Africa**.
- Certified client makes a formal request to withdraw certification.
- Infringement by the certified client of any contractual conditions between the certified client and **Partner Africa**.
- Certified client is unable or unwilling to ensure conformance to revisions of standards.
- Existence of a serious complaint, or a large number of second or third party complaints, which indicate that the system is not being maintained.
- Certified client does not allow periodic evaluation to be conducted at the required frequency.

## 5.7 Conditions for Suspension or Cancellation of Certified client

5.7.1 Subject to actions by the certified client, the following steps will be taken leading to possible suspension or cancellation of the certified client's product certification:

- Unless a reply to the letter accompanying notification is received within 15 days, certification will be suspended, and a notification of suspension may be published at the discretion of **Partner Africa**. The certified client's response to the accompanying letter will be reviewed and the proceedings may be put on hold while clarification is sought.
- Where mutually agreed-upon corrective action is to be implemented, a time period for implementation will be specified and a review of the corrective action will be undertaken at the agreed time. This may be the subject of a special surveillance visit or of review of submitted objective evidence, at the discretion of **Partner Africa**. Should the corrective action not be considered adequate or not be completed by the agreed time, certification will be automatically suspended.
- In the case of serious circumstances, **Partner Africa** may invoke suspension during the period pending the implementation of corrective action.
- Where suspension has been invoked, unless otherwise specified, the certified client must advise **Partner Africa** every 15 days of the current situation of corrective action. Failure to meet this requirement will result in cancellation of the certified client's certification.
- Where suspension has been invoked due to failure to conduct periodic evaluation, the certified client shall give justification for failure and offer suitable date. An additional day maybe be added to routine periodic days. The date shall not be later than 13 months from last evaluation. Failure to allow for evaluation by the client within 13 months shall result in cancellation of certification.
- When corrective action to resolve the problem(s) taken by the certified client has been verified, certification will be resumed. The period of certification will not be revised to cover the period of suspension.
- Cancellation of certification will be invoked where: following suspension of certification, the certified client fails to respond to **Partner Africa's** communications within the 15 days grace period or fails to implement corrective action within the specified time period.
- In extreme circumstances **Partner Africa** may invoke the cancellation of certification with immediate effect.
- Cancellation of certification will require the certified client to assume the status of non-approval and return all certification documentation to **Partner Africa**.

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- Use of certification documents, symbols, or logos by the certified client following certification cancellation may result in legal action being taken against the certified client.
- Re-approval after certification cancellation will be on the same basis, and follow the same process as that of initial application for a new certified client. This will require a full assessment with optional document review at the discretion of **Partner Africa**.
- The de-certification will be published as a separate list and will be available at the **Partner Africa** office upon request.
- The certified client has the right to appeal any decisions of **Partner Africa** and a copy of the appeals procedures will be made available upon request.
- Scheme Manager** shall remove from the register of certified clients the company whose certificate has been cancelled. During suspension, suspension remark shall be placed in the register of certified clients.
- For all cancellation cases, the certified client's files shall be archived.

## 5.8 Refusing certification

5.8.1 Refusal of the certification is done in the following circumstances:

- Client fails to submit the corrective actions within 28 day's time frame from the date of evaluation.
- Corrective actions submitted by the client are not satisfactory considering the nonconformities / observations.
- Client fails to pay the required fees in the given time frame.
- Objective evidence submitted during the evaluation is found fake.

5.8.2 All the above reasons will lead to refusal of product certification even after completion of the evaluation. **Certification Committee** takes decision on the refusal of certificate based on the above circumstances.

5.8.3 Details of refusal of the certification are given to the client in the writing.

5.8.4 The details of refusal of certificate are maintained in the client file and the file is closed. **Scheme Manager** maintains the list of refusal of the certificates

## 6. Records/Formats

6.1 F26 Certificate formats

### ADDENDUM 1: Amendment Record

| Date | Section | Description of Change | Approved by |
|------|---------|-----------------------|-------------|
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