

# Heads Up

Issue: 467

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To: ANAB-Accredited and Applicant Management Systems CBs and MS Accreditation Assessors

From: Lori Gillespie, Vice President, Management Systems and Validation and Verification

Re: COVID-19 Update: Additional Time for Certification Activity and Monthly Reporting to ANAB

The COVID-19 pandemic is a dynamic situation and we are adjusting and changing as the situation evolves. ANAB, IAF, and many management systems scheme owners have issued requirement documents, FAQs, and guidance material related to the ongoing status and maintenance of certifications (see ANAB Heads Up 448 and 450).

In February 2020, ANAB issued Heads Up 448 to communicate allowances for ANAB-accredited certifications not covered by other scheme requirements and directly affected by COVID-19. As Heads Up 448 outlines, IAF ID 3 had to be considered and Accreditation Rule 9 had to be followed along with the CB's own processes.

## Current Positions

The COVID-19 pandemic is a long-term event and continues to affect the ability of CBs to effectively manage and maintain certifications. Because of this, and in keeping with IAF COVID-19 FAQ 31 and 32, ANAB will allow additional extensions of time for a CB and an organization to maintain an ANAB-accredited certification when appropriate.

While CBs have embraced the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in many cases successfully completed required audits, there are situations in which audits have not been able to be completed and ANAB considers extensions acceptable.

For audits directly affected by COVID-19 and where the conditions recommended by IAF ID 3 are satisfied, the following ANAB positions apply:

**Surveillance:** In situations where the use of ICT to complete an annual surveillance audit required in 2020 is not possible, the due date to complete the surveillance audit may be extended for up to six months, to be completed by June 30, 2021.

When considering postponing surveillance audits directly affected by COVID-19, CBs must consider risk and the three-year certification cycle and audit program, and the CB must ensure that the audit could not have been completed in 2020 using ICT.

**Recertification:** ANAB is allowing an extension of time for a CB and an organization to maintain an ANAB-accredited certification. The CB is allowed to grant an extension of up to an additional six months, in addition to the six months allowed under [Heads Up 448](#).

These extensions can be granted only following an audit activity by the CB, understanding this will not meet ISO/IEC 17021-1, 9.6.3.2, as the full system will not be audited; however, the audit activity is to provide confidence that the management system continues to fulfill requirements and remains effective and able to support the certification extension.

The audit activity for extending a certification must consist of more than a document review and can include use of ICT and remote auditing.

While an extension of up to 12 months from the certification expiration date can be granted, in alignment with the content of Heads up 448 and this Heads Up, the extension must be granted in increments of no more than six months (i.e., a single 12-month extension cannot be granted).

Granting an additional extension cannot result in more than a 12-month extension from the original expiration date.

When the CB successfully completes the recertification activity, the expiration of the renewed certification shall be based on the original recertification cycle. This means the organization does not gain time within their certification cycle but will be able to be recertified for the remaining time of the maximum three-year cycle. When the organization is recertified, it will be three years from the original expiration date, *not* three years from the recertification decision.

**Certification Cycle and the Audit Program:** It is understandable that the decisions made in 2020 and possibly 2021 in response to COVID-19 may affect the certification cycle and audit program. The CB must manage the certification cycle as demonstrated in the audit program based on requirements, risk, and the impact COVID-19 has had on the organization and certification.

Keep in mind, during the COVID-19 crisis CBs must manage the upcoming required audits and certification expirations; however, we caution CBs from working too far ahead, as the COVID-19 environment is subject to change, and we urge CBs to continue to manage the certification using the audit program.

### Conditions for Extensions

For extensions of time to be granted, the CB and organization must at a minimum meet the following criteria:

- The *reasons are directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- The CB has determined that fulfillment of the audit objectives cannot be achieved using ICT.
- The ANAB-accredited certifications are not controlled by other scheme requirements (see Heads Up 453 and scheme owner details).

The CB must maintain evidence and justification to support the reason for the extension.

If the CB is unable to gain confidence in the system prior to granting an extension, the extension cannot be granted, and the CB must follow its own process. If the recertification activity is not completed within the allowed 12-month extension, the CB must follow its own process, including withdrawal if appropriate, taking into consideration IAF FAQ 26, in which the CB is allowed additional time to consider restoring an expired certification.

### Monthly Reporting

ANAB Heads Up 448, issued on February 28, 2020, asked CBs to provide a list of ANAB-accredited certifications affected by COVID-19 whereby the audit was being postponed and/or the certificate was being extended.

Going forward, ANAB will not require the monthly list for any accreditation program. CBs are expected to manage clients that are affected and ANAB will follow up during the office assessment.

Thank you to all the CBs that provided the lists; we appreciate your cooperation.