

ACPL	Procedure Manual
Section Name	Procedure for Granting or Refusing, Expanding or Reducing, Suspending or restoring, Withdrawing or Renewing of Certification

1.0 Purpose:

To document, establish, implement and maintain the system for granting or refusing certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, suspending or restoring certification, withdrawing certification or renewing certification against management system standards referenced in of the Integrated Management System Manual as per requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, ISO 17021-2:2016, ISO 17021-3:2017, ISO 17021-10: 2018, ISO 17021-9:2016, ISO 22003-1:2022, ISO 27006:2015, ISO 50003:2021, IAF MD9:2023 and other applicable international standards for certification bodies providing management system certification.

2.0 Scope:

This procedure is applicable to all audits carried out on the client during a certification cycle.

3.0 Responsibility:

Managing Director

4.0 Procedure:

4.1 General

4.1.1 ACPL ensures that the person or committees that make the decisions for granting or refusing certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, suspending or restoring certification, withdrawing certification or renewing certification have not participated in the audit and will never be outsourced.

4.1.2 ACPL ensures that the personnel involved in decision-making as stated above have the competence to evaluate the audit processes and the related recommendations of the audit team. The competence requirements are identified in the document WI-CP-01.

4.1.3 The composition of certification panel who takes decision for granting or refusing maintaining, extending or reducing, suspending or restoring certification and withdrawing of certification or renewing certification is identified in document WI-CP-01, certification panel

4.1.4. Before making a certification decision, the certification panel shall review the audit reports to confirm that:

- (a) The information provided by the audit team is sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope of the certification

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- (b) In case of a major non-conformance (refer ACPL-QP-12), the corrections and corrective actions submitted by the client reviewed, accepted and verified for effectiveness of the actions taken i.e. the non-conformances is closed.
- (c) In case of minor non conformances (refer ACPL-QP-12), the planned corrections and the corrective actions are reviewed and accepted by the team leader or team member.
- (d) The person(s) excluding members of committees assigned by ACPL to make a certification decision are be employed, or are under legally enforceable arrangement with ACPL
- (e) ACPL ensures that the persons employed by, or under contract with, entities under organizational control fulfill the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021 as persons employed by, or under contract with ACPL.
- (f) ACPL records each certification decision including any additional information or clarification sought from the audit team or other sources
- (g) ACPL will not accept for certification anybody in which certification Panel Member has substantial interest as well as direct customer as next Tier status. Substantial interest will be as follow.
- I. Whole or majority ownership of another entity by the Certification Panel Member
 - II. Majority participation by the Certification Panel Member on the board of directors of another entity
 - III. A documented authority by the Certification Panel Member over another entity in a network of legal entities (in which the Certification Panel Member resides), linked by ownership or board of director control
 - IV. ACPL shall not issue unaccredited Certificate for management schemes scope for which ACPL is Accredited.

4.2. Granting the Certification.

4.2.1 The final audit reports after initial assessment by Certification Manager (Procedure: ACPL-QP-16) are submitted to the certification panel for the technical review and approval

4.2.2 In addition to the points stated in section 4.1.4 the review shall also confirm,

- There is evidence that the client's management system complies with the certification requirements.
- Both negative and positive observations are made with respect to the client's management system

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- The client is capable of meeting the agreed requirements for the product as per the scope for certification.
- The non-conformances raised are meaningful and correctly graded.
- The corrections and the corrective action identified by the client appropriate and in conformity with the risk involved.
- Internal audit and management review are effective.
- The recommendation of the audit team is favorable and is justified and accepted.

4.2.3 Depending on the risk factor attached to each technical area, the composition of the certification panel is addressed in WI-CP-01. The certification panel shall review the audit reports and take appropriate decision. The review comments and the decision are recorded in ACPL-37.

4.2.4 After the decision to grant certification, arrangement is made for the issue of certificate. Initially a draft certificate is prepared and it's correctness of entries verified by the Certification Manager.

Clients issued unaccredited certificate will be provided duly accredited certificate on obtaining Accreditation from an Accreditation Body. However, Certificate will remain valid since the date of original issue date for a period of three years subject to successful completion of annual surveillance audits.

4.2.5 The accredited certificate is finally signed by Director after ensuring that the certificate has been uploaded on website, and dispatch to the client along with other documents identified in WI-DC-01.

4.2.6 If the recommendation made by the assessment team is not accepted by the panel, the client and the audit team are accordingly informed with an explanation. ACPL shall further interact with the client to initiate appropriate action to resolve the issue. The same recorded in Audit report as applicable.

4.2.7. Certification Document: The final certificate shall be sent to the client along with conditions for the use of logo and the certification mark, PD-ACPL-01 and the logos in soft copy.

4.2.8 The Certification document shall include:

- Name and geographical location of the client
- Dates of granting, extending and renewing certification
- Expiry date or the re-certification due date
- For Certificate Number we are giving-

Year (2 Digit) + Month+ Date + S No (01-99)

In case of Un accredited certificates, UA shall be added after the certificate number

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- (e) The management system standard, including the issue number and /or the revision number, used for the audit of the certified client
- (f) The scope of certification including The name, address and the certification mark of ACPL and the accreditation symbol as per guidelines of the accreditation body
- (g) A means to identify the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents, in the vent of issue of revised certificate,
- (h) Any other information required by the standard used for certification
- (i) Revision number & date along with original certification number to distinguish the revised documents from any prior obsolete documents

4.2.9 Validity period of certification document: The certificate issued against any specific management system standard is valid for three years from date of decision on certification

4.3 Maintaining the Certification

The Certification is maintained for a period of 3 years under the following conditions.

- (a) The Surveillance Audits are conducted as planned and the client has demonstrated that it continues to satisfy the requirements of the management system standard as confirmed by ACPL.
- (b) All the non-conformance raised during previous surveillance are closed within the time frame agreed and correction and corrective actions for the non-conformities raised during the current audit are identified and accepted by ACPL as described in procedure ACPL-QP-12
- (c) The Internal Audit and the management reviews are conducted as scheduled and there are no issues pending.
- (d) The client shall maintain suitable records of customer complaints and keep the records of investigation and remedial actions taken with respect to such complaints for verification by ACPL auditors.
- (e) All outstanding dues to ACPL are paid
- (f) The certification panel approves the audit
- (g) The continuation of certification is held up on the ground that the team leaders report for any major nonconformity other situation which may lead to suspension or withdrawal of certification.

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(h) ACPL has a system that requires the audit team leader to report to ACPL initiates a review by competent personnel, different from those who carried out the audit, to determine whether certification can be maintained;

(i) Competent personnel of ACPL monitor its surveillance activities, including monitoring the reporting by its auditors, to confirm that the certification activity is operating effectively

4.4. Expanding the Certification

4.4.1. Any request by the client for any extension of scope is dealt as per procedure, ACPL-QP-13.

4.4.2. The decision for granting extension is taken as described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this procedure.

4.4.3. ACPL shall issue a new certificate with amended scope without any change in the certification period as identified in the previous certification document. The new certificate shall contain revision number and date.

4.5. Reducing the Certification

4.5.1. ACPL shall decide to reduce the client's scope of certification by excluding the parts not meeting the requirements, when the client has persistently and seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification. Such exclusions shall be consistent with the certification standard.

4.5.2. If the reduction in scope is requested by the client it shall be dealt as per procedure –ACPL-QP-13

4.5.3. The decision for reducing the scope is taken as described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the procedure.

4.5.4. ACPL shall issue a new certificate with amended scope without any change in the certification period as identified in the previous certification document. The new certificate shall contain revision number and date.

4.6 Renewing the certification or re-certification

4.6.1 ACPL shall renew the certification as per procedure for re-certification ACPL-QP-15

4.6.2. ACPL shall make decisions on renewing certification based on the following,

(a) The results of the re-certification audit

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(b) The results of the review of the system over the period of certification

(c) Complaints received from customers of certified clients

4.6.3 The decision for re-certification is taken as described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this procedure.

4.6.4 ACPL shall issue a new certificate as described in sections 4.2.8 and 4.2.9 of this procedure

4.7 Suspending and Withdrawing Certification

4.7.1 Suspending certification

4.7.1.1 ACPL shall suspend certification in cases wherein

- The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.
- The client does not allow surveillance and re-certification audits to be conducted at the agreed frequencies.
- Wishful misuse of logo & reference to certification.
- Non-compliance to submission of Corrective action as stated procedure ACPL-QP-12.
- Voluntary suspension requested by the client
- The certified client doesn't pay the certification / surveillance or recertification fees s greed by client prior to services extended (Certification agreement ACPL-05).

4.7.1.2 For re-certification and surveillance audits if the client does not submit the corrective action within 20 workings days from the date of audit, it shall lead to suspension of certification.

4.7.1.3 For certification audit the failure on the part of the client to submit the corrective action within the stipulated time may lead to show cause notice by ACPL. If the client does not respond favorably within 03 months the audit shall be treated as cancelled.

4.7.1.4 The suspension shall be for a period of maximum 06 months and the suspended status of the client shall be publicly made available in the register of certified clients being maintained by ACPL at its registered office. During this period the client shall discontinue the use of logo or any reference of certification in advertising matter, as directed by ACPL, at the time of giving notice of suspension and the same also addressed in PD-RRC-01 (Rules and Regulations for Certification) and ACPL-05 (Client Agreement) addressed in.

4.7.1.5 The decision for suspending certification is taken by the certification panel of ACPL.

4.7.2 Withdrawing certification

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4.7.2.1 ACPL shall withdraw the certificate under the following circumstances.

- Failure of the client to resolve the issues of suspension within six months shall result in withdrawal of certification
- Other reasons like major legal complaint; company involved in malpractices, ACPL loses accreditation etc.
- Client voluntarily requested for a withdrawal.
- The certified client doesn't pay the certification / surveillance or recertification fees agreed by client prior to services extended. (even after suspension)

4.7.2.2 Upon withdrawal of certification the client ceases to enjoy the certification status and shall accordingly return the certificate as directed by ACPL at the time of withdrawal notice.

4.7.2.3 The decision for withdrawing certification is taken by the certification panel of ACPL.

4.7.3 Upon request from any party ACPL shall correctly state the status of certification of a client's management system as being suspended, withdrawn or reduced.

4.7.4.3 Restoring

ACPL restores the suspended certification if the issue that has resulted in the suspension has been resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by ACPL shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

NOTE In most cases, the suspension would not exceed six months.

4.8 Criteria for Refusing Certification-

ACPL will refuse client Certification under following circumstances

- a) Customer do not have a documented management system that meets applicable standard or other normative documents.
- b) One internal Audit and management review cycle has not been completed and non-conformity's, if any have not been corrected.
- c) The applicant does not meet the criteria of certification and all major non-conformities, if any found during assessment have not been closed. For minor NC's corrective action has not been taken or planned has not been received.
- d) There are adverse reports/information/complaints with the ACPL about the applicant regarding the quality and effectiveness of implementation of system as per ACPL Contract terms and schemes for registration.
- e) The applicant has not paid all the fees.

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5.0 Records

- (a) ACPL-37 Certification Panel Decision
- (b) ACPL-40 Register of certified clients

6.0 Reference

- (a) ACPL-QP-12-Procedure for initial audit
- (b) ACPL-QP-13- Procedure for special audit
- (c) ACPL-QP-14- Procedure for surveillance audit
- (d) ACPL-QP-15-Procedure for re-certification audit
- (e) ACPL-QP-16- Procedure for assessment of audit report
- (f) PD-UL-01- Conditions for use of logo & certification mark
- (g) WI-DI-01- Documents sent to client
- (h) WI-CP-01- Certification panel
- (i) PD-RRC-01, Rules and Regulations for Certification
- (j) ACPL-05- Certification Agreement.

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