


Procedure No. IQCPL-QPR-26	Title: Procedure for Remote Assessment
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1	Purpose
	To provide the guidelines for Auditors, Technical Expert and client for conducting remote assessment in case of emergency situations or extra ordinary events
2	Scope
	Applies to IQCPL certification personnel , auditors, technical experts and Client organisation for conducting remote assessment of Stage 1, Stage 2 , Surveillance and Recertification audits
3	References
	IAF ID 3 - Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, IQCPLs and Certified Organizations IAF MD 4 – The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing / Assessment purposes BIQCPL 003 - NABCB Policy on Conducting Remote Assessment
4	Responsibility
	Director Technical, Manager Technical, Auditor, Technical Expert and Client
5	Procedure
5.1	The IQCPL assesses the risks of continuing certification to client in emergency / extra ordinary situations. Records are maintained in Risk Register
5.2	<p>IQCPL is unable to complete surveillance audits because of the state of the organization or travel restrictions or Natural Disaster; IQCPL gives flexibility in audit dates. While managing required surveillance audits,</p> <p>IQCPL ensures that Surveillance activities are completed as early as possible once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational at client end.</p>
5.3	In case it is not possible to complete the surveillance activities within the timelines as per due date of audit, a further extension of another 3 months is given in case where the remote audit of client cannot be carried out in the initial extension of 3 months, thus allowing a period of maximum 6 months for surveillance audit.
5.4	IQCPL maintains records of extensions allowed to client due to any reason including emergency situations / extra ordinary events in Client Register.
5.5	All Subsequent surveillance activities is to be continued in line with the original programme such as communication client about surveillance audit before a month & follow up to client to finalise the audit date.
5.6	Extended periods between surveillance visits may result in a need for additional surveillance activities during the certification cycle i.e. all processes are covered in surveillance audit. The IQCPL considers other means of monitoring that may be available such as telephonic interactions, internet based assessments and desktop reviews of submitted documentation.

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If a recertification audit or other recertification requirements cannot be completed prior to the expiration of accredited certification, If the IQCPL is unable to gain confidence in the system for which the extension would be granted, the IQCPL does following

- Suspend the certification Status. Inform the client through email.
 - Cancels the certificates if client does not respond within a month after suspension.
- When the IQCPL successfully completes the recertification activity, the expiration of the renewed certification is based on the original recertification cycle. This means not providing the organization an additional six months of certification. When the organization is recertified, it will not be for three years from the recertification decision, but three years from the previous expiration date.
- If it is not possible for IQCPL to conclude the recertification audits even within this extended six months period due to prevailing travel restrictions, the IQCPL further extends the certificate validity by another six months, preferably in intervals of 3 months, i.e. an extension of 12 months in total. However, if this time-frame, from the certification date exceeds 12 months, the IQCPL completes the recertification audit as possible using remote means. If recertification audit is not completed within 12 months then Re-certification status is withdrawn.
- In all those cases where the processes cannot be remotely assessed in an effective way to the satisfaction of the IQCPL, the certification scope is partially reduced or the certificate is completely withdrawn, and a new initial audit shall be required. In any case, a decision shall be made taking also into consideration the updated risk associated with the operational control capability of the organization in the extraordinary conditions and the type of certification scheme. In this case, the expiration of the renewed certification is based on the original recertification cycle.
- IQCPL carries out Initial certification audit (Stage-1 & 2) through Remote audits (in part or full) considering the risk factors and based on its risk evaluation process. However, the risk factors may vary for specific schemes and/or scope sectors, and IQCPL ensures that risk of initial certification audit through Remote is low.

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In emergency / extra ordinary situations IQCPL conducts Stage 1 audit by offline mode through internet connectivity tools (ICT) such Google met, Zoom, Microsoft team or WHATSAPP. If client is unable to connect through any of ICT, then client is asked to email required documents for review and feedback is communicated or discussed through telephone.


Remote stage-2 audit is conducted by IQCPL auditor through ICT tools in consultation with client, ICT is arranged by either Client or IQCPL auditor. It is done as per the following


- a) Audit plan is shared with client where audit mode is mentioned and guidelines for remote audit are communicated to clients
- b) If possible Lead Auditor carry out connectivity trails are done with client representative one day prior to audit.
- c) Client is informed to share the link with auditor and required Auditees.
- d) Auditor can ask for some documents in advance for review such as internal audit, Management review, Quality objectives data, Product and process information etc.
- e) Auditor or technical expert is responsible for deleting client information after completion of audit.
- f) If auditor or client face connectivity issues during remote audit, auditor can ask client to send required documents on email for review and verification. Verification feedback can shared on email or phone to client. If formal closing meeting is not possible due poor connectivity, it can be done on phone and client feedback can be taken.
- g) Client need to be submits attendance sheet, confidentiality document through email.
- h) Analysis and actions shall be submitted by client to Auditor or IQCPL office for review.
- i) Auditor shall be prepare the audit report and submit to IQCPL for further review and actions.
- j) Director Technical or Manager Technical shall review the remote audit process and ensures that requirement of stage 2 audits are fulfilled as per ISO 17021-1.
- k) Auditor can record the key part of audit process for future reference. Retention period of the recordings shall be minimum 3 months.

IQCPL performs an additional onsite visit to client site to review the critical manufacturing operations within 6 months of the remote audit (If scope belongs to critical sector), once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational or if not possible to do so due to the reasons as stated, IQCPL shall carry out onsite visit of the client manufacturing operations within a year after the remote audit.

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5.9	The IQCPL ensures that a certificate is issued after complete evaluation of all the applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 (9.3.1.2 Stage 1 and 9.3.1.3 Stage 2) through a complete and effective audit of the client's management system, followed by a successful review and decision making activities.
5.10	In case of an Extraordinary event or circumstance, the IQCPL evaluates that its client and/or its resources is / will be seriously affected and the extent of it, and documents the justification for having audits exceeding the due date
5.11	IQCPL informs certified clients respectively of any on-going developments and any changes to the policy or processes implemented through email. Procedure is made available on IQCPL website for reference.
5.12	Where a standard or scheme provides no flexibility with respect to extraordinary events or circumstances that have occurred, guidance and an agreed way ahead shall always be sought from the NABCB, and/or the scheme owner as applicable.
5.13	The IQCPL maintains complete records of actions taken, together with the rationale behind decisions on actions taken. These records shall be made available for NABCB to review upon demand.
5.14	The IQCPL maintains a list of NABCB accredited certifications affected whereby the audit/inspection is being postponed and/or the certificate is being extended, it includes: Client name, city/state/province/country, standard(s), (normal) certification—expiration, status (e.g., delayed audit, extended certification) and specific reason for the exception (e.g., organization shutdown, travel restrictions for audit team etc.).
Ref Documents / Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartiality Analysis (Risk Analysis Review) – (IQCPL/MKT/05) • Client Register – (IQCPL/ADM/20) • Guidelines for client and Auditor for remote audit – (IQCPL/WI/02) • Suspension Letter • Cancellation letter 	

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