



WEST AFRICAN ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (SOAC)

SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION (C03.01)

Approval	Effective Date
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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document describes the provisions made for suspensions, withdrawals, and terminations of accreditation granted by SOAC.

2. REFERENCES

ISO / IEC 17011, Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

3. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVIEW

This document is applicable from the date mentioned on the cover page. It will be updated as necessary.

4. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Version 00: creation.

Version 01: revision and update.

5. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Body (Organization): organization accredited by SOAC.

Suspension: temporary invalidation of all or part of the scope for which accreditation has been granted.

Termination: the decision of an accredited body to end its accreditation.

Withdrawal: SOAC's decision to cancel all or part of accreditation.

6. SUSPENSION

6.1 General

The organization may request the suspension of all or part of its accreditation.

The suspension may also be initiated by SOAC.

The suspension shall take effect on the date of receipt by the notification body of the suspension decided by SOAC, and notified by recorded delivery letter, specifying the scope of the suspension of accreditation, the reasons for the decision, and the conditions under which the body can regain its accreditation.

SOAC establishes an amendment to the technical annex describing the activities for which accreditation is maintained and, where applicable, an amendment to the accreditation certificate.

The suspension whether voluntary or not, accreditation can only be recovered after written notification from SOAC.

During the period of suspension, the organization shall remain liable for the right to use the accreditation symbols.

6.2 Voluntary suspension

6.2.1 Request for suspension

The organization may request the suspension of all or part of its accreditation since internal changes (relocations, alterations, works, etc.) no longer allow it to guarantee compliance of its work with the accreditation requirements.

The request for suspension must be addressed to SOAC before the date on which the organization will no longer be able to meet the accreditation requirements or immediately after the discovery of this condition and specify in particular:

- changes and or means involved;
- the desired date for the start of the suspension;
- the technical fields and geographical locations concerned by the request for suspension;
- the solutions envisaged remedying the situation;
- The likely period of compliance with the accreditation requirements with the requirements of accreditation.

When acknowledging receipt of the request for suspension, if applicable, SOAC issues an amendment to the accreditation certificate and technical annex with an indication of the activities for which accreditation is maintained.

6.2.2 Lifting suspension

When the term of suspension exceeds **06 months**, the lifting of the suspension may be delivered following the results of an extraordinary assessment.

When the organization considers it has complied with the requirements of accreditation, it must perform an internal audit on all the activity subject to the voluntary suspension and then request to SOAC in writing to lift the suspension.

The request for lifting suspension shall:

- specify the activities for which the organization seeks the lifting of suspension;
- indicate the effective date of compliance with the accreditation requirements;
- include a copy of the internal audit report containing the auditor's detailed opinion in compliance with all accreditation requirements for the activities concerned.

Upon receipt of the request for lifting suspension, if the voluntary suspension period is less than **06 months**, SOAC will review the file and notify its decision to the body.

In case of a favourable decision, SOAC draws up an amendment to the technical annex describing the activities covered by the accreditation and, where applicable, an amendment to the accreditation certificate.

The organization's statements and the veracity of the facts found during the internal audit are checked during the consecutive assessment or extension operation, closest to the lifting of the suspension. This additional task may in some cases modify the estimated duration of the scheduled evaluation.

In case of an unfavourable decision, the body has the opportunity to appeal in accordance with document C04.

If SOAC considers that an extraordinary assessment is necessary, it shall define and communicate to the body the terms of its fulfillment. These extraordinary assessment costs are paid for by the organization. In principle, the execution of this extraordinary assessment does not change the periodic monitoring activities.

6.3 Suspension at the initiative of SOAC

6.3.1 Suspension decision

When SOAC finds that an accredited body no longer meets the requirements for accreditation, it may decide to suspend all or part of accredited activities. This finding may result from the examination of an assessment report within the normal framework of the monitoring cycle of accredited organizations or, after a contradictory examination, from an observation made by SOAC, following the processing of a complaint or from any other source.

6.3.2 Lifting suspension

Lifting suspension is decided by SOAC, after the body has brought, according to the required terms, evidence that he has remedied the deviations and that he is again able to meet the accreditation requirements for the activities concerned.

SOAC establishes an amendment to the technical annex describing the activities for which accreditation has been granted and, where applicable, an amendment to the accreditation certificate.

7. TERMINATION

When a body considers no longer be able to ensure compliance of its services with the requirements of accreditation or when it simply wishes to end its accreditation, it shall address a request for termination of accreditation to SOAC for all or part of activities for which it has been granted under the terms of the agreement in **Clause 16** binding the two parties.

The request for termination must specify the date on which it is desired as well as areas and geographical locations concerned.

The termination is recorded by SOAC, which confirms the date of its implementation. In case of partial termination, SOAC establishes an amendment to the technical annex describing the activities for which accreditation is maintained and, where applicable, an amendment to the accreditation certificate.

8. WITHDRAWAL

When an accredited body no longer meets repeatedly with the accreditation requirements as defined in its agreement with SOAC, or if serious shortcomings are highlighted in its operation, SOAC may withdraw the accreditation for all or part of the field for which it has been granted.

The withdrawal shall take effect on the date of receipt by the SOAC decision body of notification and sent by recorded delivery letter, specifying the scope of accreditation concerned by the withdrawal as well as the reasons for the decision.

If an organization is suspended for more than **15 months** and during this period it has not made any request to SOAC for lifting this suspension, the withdrawal of the organization's accreditation is given by SOAC with a **notice of 03 months**.

Following the withdrawal of its accreditation, the body may not apply for a new accreditation before a period of **06 months**.

9. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

Accreditation gives the customer confidence in the quality of services provided under his cover. It is therefore essential that the customer is informed unequivocally when the corresponding activity is not covered by the accreditation (suspension, reduction, termination or withdrawal).

Similarly, when accreditation is issued in connection with an activity related to the regulation and when the administration requests it, the latter is systematically informed by SOAC in parallel with the applicant.

In accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 standard for the operation of accreditation bodies, SOAC publishes the status of valid accreditation in order to make information available to customers and interested parties. This includes information about the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation, including dates and scope.

As soon as the suspension, cancellation or withdrawal of accreditation is issued, regardless of the reason, and in accordance with **Clause 8.1** of the agreement signed with SOAC, the organization must:

- stop making reference to accreditation for activities that are no longer covered thereof;
- inform its customers of this situation, so as to avoid any ambiguity likely to deceive them, especially for the services under negotiation or in progress.

10. TABLE OF MODIFICATIONS

No.	Source	Modification in brief (Relevant changes)
	C03.00- 24 January 2019	
	Creation	
	C03.01- 03 September 2019	
1	§ 2	References have been revised in line with the wording of the standards