



Procedure
Procedure for developing, extending and discontinuing accreditation schemes

Code: P11
Version: 02

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Date: 11/06/2020	Date: 12/06/2020	Date: 12/06/2020

1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to describe the process to be followed by SOAC when developing a new accreditation scheme or extending an existing scheme and when discontinuing an accreditation scheme.

This procedure applies to all accreditation activities including accreditation of testing laboratories, calibration laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies.

2. References

- ISO/IEC 17011, Conformity assessment - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
- Quality Manual (QM)
- C01-Accreditation rules
- C09 - Rules of procedure for accreditation committees
- P09 - Competence Management
- P15 - Personnel Training

3. Distribution list

All services concerned.

4. Effective date and review

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

5. Summary of changes

Version 00: Creation

Version 01: Revision to some sections and update of the table of modifications.

Version 02: Technical revision and update following peer evaluation document review

6. Terms and definitions

DG: Director-General

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

NAFP: National Accreditation Focal Point

QTSO: Quality & Technical Senior Officer

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

UEMOA: West Africa Economic and Monetary Union

7. Process description

7.1 Request for a new accreditation scheme or extension of a scheme

Development of a new accreditation scheme or the extension of an existing accreditation

scheme may be initiated by SOAC or any of its stakeholders such as:

- a) UEMOA Commission
- b) ECOWAS Commission
- c) UEMOA Member States governments
- d) Regulators
- e) Regional / National organized Private Sector, etc.

A request for accreditation scheme development shall be proposed to SOAC by the initiating stakeholder. Upon receipt of such a request, the Director-General shall assign the QTSO to initiate a project for the development of such a scheme and subsequently manage the implementation of the scheme.

7.2 Feasibility study

SOAC with the support of the relevant stakeholders, markets information, and if necessary with the assistance of the NAFF (s), in the SOAC Member States shall conduct a feasibility study for the project, addressing notably the following:

7.2.1 Context Analysis

This analysis shall allow identifying the scenarios (pessimistic, reasonable, optimistic) for the launch of the new scheme or the extension of an existing scheme. Tools such as the SWOT may be used (See Annex). This context analysis shall cover, as much as possible, the research on the regulations covering the schemes, as well as, the collection of the views of interested parties on the project.

7.2.2. Resource requirements

SOAC shall identify the resource requirements for launching a new scheme or the extension of an existing one. This identification shall cover the following:

- a) analysis of its present competence and resources;
- b) setting up of the relevant accreditation scheme (i.e. accreditation of bodies performing inspection, bodies providing audit and certification of management systems, bodies operating certification of persons, bodies certifying products, processes and services, in line with ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17024, ISO/IEC 17065, etc.);
- c) accessing and employing suitable expertise ;
- d) the need for application or guidance documents such as regional, national or international standards, as well as the requirements of the regulators;
- e) preparing for implementation of transition arrangements;
- f) training of SOAC personnel;
- g) views of interested parties.

7.2.2.1 Objectives

SOAC shall identify the objectives to achieve when launching or extending a new scheme.

7.2.2.2 Balance of charges

The resources to mobilize to launch a new scheme or expand an existing scheme shall be offset, as much as possible, by the resources generated by these latter.

7.3 Approval of the feasibility study

The Director-General and the QTSO shall consider the feasibility study report.

This team may decide to approve or reject the recommendations presented in the feasibility study.

If the project seems feasible, the team shall also consider the timelines for its realization;

SOAC board shall be informed on the outputs of the feasibility study for its approval.

7.4 Establishment of a technical committee (TC)

The TC consists of at least the Director-General and the QTSO. The TC main role shall be to work on the scheme technical requirements. To this end, suitable expertise familiar with the concerned schemes shall be identified to advise or support the TC capacity building on the new scheme. Benchmarking activities may be developed with other Accreditation Bodies which have already implemented the scheme.

ECOWAS specialized Committees as the Community Committee for Conformity Assessment (ECOCONF) and the Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS) may be also used.

7.5 Development of a pool of assessors and experts

This shall be done in accordance with P09 Competence management.

7.6 Development and approval of the technical requirements documents

Based on the advice of the TC, the QTSO shall identify all requirements for accreditation and submit for approval by the DG. Under the responsibility of the latter, he shall :

- Arrange for training the assessors in accordance with procedure P09-Competence management.
- Evaluate the need for standards or guidance documents relevant to the new field and make them available.
- Arrange for training the relevant SOAC's personnel in the new field.
- Make Arrangements to consider requirements of regulatory bodies.

The present competence of accreditation for SOAC is recorded and reviewed annually by the QTSO on the Form F03P11.

7.7 New accreditation scheme implementation

SOAC and the scheme sponsor will embark on a series of promotional activities informing interested parties in the relevant SOAC Member State(s) about the new scheme and invite applications for accreditation.

After the first assessment is conducted, the TC shall evaluate all post-assessment reports including the feedback from the assessed facility to determine the adequacy of the scheme and recommend adjustments or improvements if necessary.

The QTSO shall ensure that the criteria used for the new schemes do not contravene any international requirements in terms of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA's).

7.8 Discontinuation of an accreditation scheme

SOAC may discontinue in part or in full an accreditation scheme where the latter is deemed to be of no value. Prior to discontinuing accreditation schemes, SOAC shall:

- Seek the views of interested parties;
- Review any contractual obligations;
- Make transitional arrangements for any accredited facilities with other accreditation bodies offering the same scheme.

SOAC shall also communicate with interested parties concerning the discontinuation. SOAC shall withdraw any information related to the scheme or part of the scheme as soon as the transition is complete.

8. Related documents

Refer to F02P01-Current QMS Control list

9. Table of modifications

No.	Source	Modification in brief (Relevant changes)
P11.00- 21 July 2019		
Creation		
P11.01- 16 October 2019		
1	§ 2	The references have been revised in line with the wording of the standards
2	§ 6	The word "abbreviation" (title) has been replaced by "Terms" (title)
3	§ 7	All the sections of this chapter have been reorganized and technically revised
4	§ 8	This section has been revised : -the words "related forms" (title) have been replaced by "related documents" (title).
5	Annex	Addition of the annex to highlight SWOT analysis tools
P11.02- 11 June 2020		
1	Header	Title renamed and updated
2	§ 1	Deleted some words and updating with addition of a new paragraph
3	§ 2	A new reference added
4	§ 7.2.1	Use of the words "views of interested parties" instead of "stakeholders"
5	§ 7.2.2	This section has been revised and updated for alignment

		with the chapter of the standard relating to the development and extension of accreditation schemes
6	§ 7.6	Technically revised and updated of this section which specifies responsibilities and scope of applications

Annex: SWOT ANALYSIS TOOLS

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<p>What assets and skills can be identified in this field? What is it appealing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Top management and other personnel qualities b) Pools of experienced assessors and experts c) Laws and decrees in force for the facilitation of the scope of accreditation activities d) Best revenue sources e) Core competencies f) Overall advantages etc.. 	<p>List of any poor market, competency deficits and pessimistic factors identified in this field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Incompetencies in the new schemes b) Lack of experienced assessors and experts to cover the new schemes c) Sources of revenue loss d) Resource deficits e) Areas of improvement etc...
EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<p>Assessment of the climate of the market. List of any external factors benefiting this new scheme or the extension of an existing scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) National and regional regulatory advancements b) Competitiveness and availability of value chains c) Stronger demand d) Evolving customer needs e) Large potential market f) Favorable trends g) Pre-funding of training for assessors 	<p>List of any hazards of entering this field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Obstacles b) Economic climate c) Market shifts d) Areas of vulnerability e) regulatory texts not yet adopted or outdated.