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1.0 Purpose

This document provides a description of the process for reducing the scope of, terminating, suspending and withdrawing certifications.

2.0 Scope

Applies to all certifications provided by INSPIRE CERT to relevant audit criteria, throughout all stages of the certification process. At all times, INSPIRE CERT shall be able to confirm the status of any certification as valid, suspended, withdrawn, or reduced in scope.

3.0 Responsibility

The Certification Manager is responsible for implementing this process and monitoring it for efficiency and effectiveness. Certificate Authority personnel are responsible for implementing this process as it applies to their respective program(s). The Certification Authority rendering a decision shall not have been involved with the certification activity in review.

4.0 Definitions

a) Suspension is a temporary status which can only end by full reinstatement or withdrawal of certification. During this period, the client's certification is temporarily invalid.
b) Reduction of scope may occur when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for parts of the scope of certification. With any such occurrence, those parts of the scope of certification may be excluded. Any such reduction shall be in line with the requirements of the audit criteria used for certification.
c) Termination: Withdrawal of the certification at the client's request
d) Withdrawal: Action by INSPIRE CERT to terminate the validity of the certificate
e) Closing of corrective action: A corrective action is considered to be closed once the implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions have been verified and confirmed.

5.0 Suspension General

A certificate's validity is subject to ongoing requirements for surveillance audits, recertification audits, and other conditions specified in the client's contract with INSPIRE CERT. The process may begin when any of the following occur:

a) The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.
b) Surveillance or recertification audits are not conducted at the required frequencies.
c) The certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.
d) Corrective Actions are not closed within the specified timeframe.
Note: After 60 days of non-receipt of corrective actions from the client, notification will be sent to the client notifying them of the potential of suspension. If further delay occurs and the 90-day time limit is exceeded, the designated certification authority personnel shall provide directions on the

suspension of the certificate.

e) Violations of INSPIRE CERT contractual requirements (includes unpaid invoices).

f) As a result of an investigation conducted regarding a complaint against a certified client.

6.0 Suspension and reduction of scope

Based on any of the above-identified conditions, any personnel may recommend the suspension of a client's certification or, except for items b) and e) above, the reduction of the scope of certification of the client. The recommendation and justification shall be submitted to the appropriate Certification Authority personnel for approval. The approved decision shall include the conditions for lifting the suspension or reinstating the complete scope of certification.

In the case of suspension, for surveillance or recertification audits not conducted at the required frequencies, violations of INSPIRE CERT contractual requirements (includes unpaid invoices) or requests from the certified client for voluntary suspension, the suspension decision can also be made by the Certification Manager. Suspension is not to exceed 180 days unless approved by the Technical Manager and/or when required, by the Accreditation Body or Sector Authority Organizations.

INSPIRE CERT will update the status of the client certification in its directory of certified clients and take any other measures it deems appropriate.

In the case of multi-site organizations, suspension applies to the certification of the entire organization, although the issue may relate to one or more of the sites only.

Once the approval of the decision of suspension or reduction of scope is completed, the affected client will be notified in writing of the suspension of its certification. The letter typically indicates:

a) Reason for suspension or reduction of scope.

b) Maximum duration of suspension or reduction of scope.
Conditions for the suspension or reduction of scope to be lifted (i.e., timeline submission of corrective actions, special surveillance visit, etc.), in accordance with the certification scheme, when applicable.

c) Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in suspension or reduction of scope in the specified timeframe shall result in withdrawal or permanent reduction of the scope of certification.

d) INSPIRE CERT will notify other parties as applicable and communicate with client if other parties need to be included.

e) The client is to be notified that the suspension decision may be appealed (please provide the reference to - Appeals and Complaints Process)

6.1 Subsequent actions relating to closure of corrective actions

If the conditions related to the lifting of the suspension are satisfied, Certification Authority personnel shall be notified and re-instate the certification. If the conditions included a timely response to corrective action

closure, follow-up verification shall be performed as per the disposition of the conditions for lifting the suspension or reinstatement of the complete scope of certification. If satisfactory, the results are to be forwarded to Certification Authority personnel for re-instatement of the certification. Certificate authority personnel, depending on the level of the correction actions will determine if a special visit is required or not. If yes, then refer to scheduling process for steps to follow.

If the results are unsatisfactory, or if the client fails to respond adequately to INSPIRE CERT request, Certification Authority shall initiate the withdrawal of the certification per section 5.0 of the present document.

7.0 Process Monitoring

Technical Review and Certificate Authority personnel are responsible for reviewing suspended certificates to ensure the specified time limits of the suspensions are not exceeded.

8.0 Withdrawal - General

A certificate's validity is subject to ongoing requirements for surveillance and recertification audits, and other conditions specified in the client's contract with INSPIRE CERT.The withdrawal process may begin upon verification when any of the following examples occur:

a) Termination - Client wishes to cancel and sends formal notification (in writing);
b) Deficiency in certified client's management system is identified
c) Corrective Actions are not closed within specified timeframe
d) Incorrect/inappropriate use of certificate(s) and/or certification mark(s)
e) Lack of payment
f) Violations of INSPIRE CERT contractual requirements
g) The client ceases to exist as a legal entity in its form as certified
h) When a client refuses or fails to schedule required maintenance surveillance audits, special surveillance, or re-certification
i) In the case of corporate certification, decertification is caused by one or more of the sites no longer fulfilling the necessary criteria for maintaining the certification.
j) Recommendation as a result of the escalation of a suspension decision (Ref: section 6.0 of the present document).

9.0 Withdrawal

Based on any of the above identified conditions, any Management or Certification Authority personnel may recommend the withdrawal of a client's certification. The process is initiated with a formal letter to the client indicating the reason and the effective date of the withdrawal of the certification. Additionally, the following information is included:

a) The client is advised to discontinue the use of its certificate and all advertising material that

contains any reference to its certified status or shows INSPIRE CERT and or the Accreditation Body mark(s).

b) If it is a requirement of the applicable audit criteria, the client is required to send written notification to its customers who require certification, advising them that they are no longer certified.

c) The client is to be notified that the withdrawal decision may be appealed (please provide the reference to ICQ-PROC-15 Appeals and Complaints Procedure)

Withdrawal decisions are to be approved by Certification Authority personnel. In the case of withdrawal for items a), e), f), g) and h) in section 8.0 above, the suspension decision can also be made by the Managing Director, the Certification Manager or Certification Authority personnel.

10.0 INSPIRE CERT Internal requirements

- Certificate authority personnel will enter all required information into the operating system to initiate the suspension process.

- INSPIRE CERT is responsible for tracking withdrawn certifications originally issued under their accreditation. At a minimum, the following information is tracked:

a) Record of notification sent to client.

b) If withdrawal is due to a product safety recall or regulatory issues, the Certification Manager will be notified and will consider if any public agency requires notification, and take appropriate action.

The withdrawal status of the client's certification will remain in the directory of certified clients for a period of at least 90 days

11.0 Input

Certificate authority personnel will enter all required information into the suspension and withdrawal file system (Client Database) to initiate the suspension process.

12.0 Reference Documents

ICQ-FOR-70 Suspension Notice
ICQ-FOR-70 Withdrawal Notice
ICQ-PROC-15 Appeals and Complaints Procedure

13.0 Revision History

REVISION NUMBER	SECTION	CHANGE MADE	DATE OF REVISION	PREPARED BY	REVIEWED BY	APPROVED BY
00	-	Initial Release	15/01/2025	Compliance Officer	Certification Manager	Managing Director