



MP 08 - 03

SUSPENDING, WITHDRAWING AND REDUCING ACCREDITATION

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1. Purpose/Scope

This procedure outlines the actions NiNAS will take when an organisation is subject to a suspension or withdrawal of accreditation, or reduction of accreditation scope whether such is voluntary or not. It describes the procedure to be followed when organisations are to be suspended for:

- a) Non-compliance with requirements;
- b) Exceeding the corrective action timeframe;
- c) Non-payment of fees; and
- d) Change of physical location or loss of approved signatories.

2.0 Definitions/References

2.1 Suspension: A temporary invalidation of an accreditation due to a first time or temporary manifestation of one of the above conditions;

2.2 Reduction: A suspension or withdrawal of a portion of the accredited scope;

2.3 Voluntary Actions: Any of the above that are initiated by the accredited organisation, for example its business focus has changed.

2.4 Withdrawal: The cancelling of an accreditation due to repeat or chronic manifestation of one or more of the above conditions by the accredited organisation.

2.5 Enforced Suspension: A type of suspension initiated by NiNAS.

2.6 CAB: Conformity Assessment Body

2.7 DG/CEO: Director General/Chief Executive Officer

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity assessment - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

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3. General

Conditions under which NiNAS will implement suspension, reduction or withdrawal of accreditation include:

- i. Terms and conditions in the *Accreditation Agreement* or the *Agreement* for the Use of Accreditation Symbols have been dishonoured;
- ii. Competencies to perform the accredited scope have been lost;
- iii. Reassessment or Surveillance report results have resulted in a loss of confidence in the accredited certificates issued by the accredited organisation;
- iv. Corrective Action Requests have been ignored, repeatedly delayed or not competently addressed;
- v. The organisation has been found guilty of breaking the laws;
- vi. When the organisation brings the name of NiNAS into disrepute;
- vii. Failure to renew accreditation either by not paying the necessary fees or by not responding to any request to begin the process of renewing such accreditation.
- viii. Non-payment of fees.
- ix. Any other reason that might compromise the integrity of the results produced by the organisation or compliance with accreditation requirements.

3.1 Decision to Take Action

Decisions to suspend, reduce or withdraw accreditation are made by either:

- i) The Accreditation Advisory Committee (following assessment);
- ii) The DG/CEO in consultation with the Director of Accreditation in the case of suspension, voluntary or enforced withdrawals or reductions of accreditation scope for failure to comply with the terms and conditions stipulated in the NiNAS Application for Accreditation (F 072A), and not following the outcome of an assessment.

3.1.1 When an action is voluntary, the Director of Accreditation is made aware of the request. A *Notification of Voluntary Action* letter is prepared for the Director's signature, an amended scope is attached and the client listing on the NiNAS website is updated. Organisations that are placed in voluntary suspension shall give an undertaking to adequately address the circumstances that caused the request for suspension within three (3) months of the effective date of suspension.



Suspensions and withdrawals cannot be backdated.

3.1.2 When the action is initiated by NiNAS and option 3.1 (ii) above is chosen, the following apply:

- a) The individual responsible for the accreditation file will present the rationale for the action to the Director of Accreditation. (If the Director is responsible for the file the rationale shall be presented to the DG/CEO);
- b) Upon Agreement, the rationale is presented to the DG/CEO
- c) The DG/CEO reviews the matter with a view to taking action within a 48 hour period;
- d)
- e) The appropriate *Notice of Action* is prepared for communication with the accredited organisation;
- f) The Notice is duly brought to the attention of a senior officer of the accredited organisation; It is possible in certain cases such as where an organisation is out of business, it may not be possible for NiNAS to assure itself that a senior officer has been made aware;
- g) The listing of accredited organisation is amended accordingly on the NiNAS website.

3.2 Suspension for Non-payment of Fees and/or Non Renewal of Accreditation

3.2.1 An accredited organisation may be suspended for failure to renew accreditation either due to its inability to pay fees, or for any other reason relating to the organisation's action or inaction. The Director of Accreditation will present the rationale for suspension to the DG/CEO for approval.

3.2.2 An accredited organisation that has neither paid its fees nor made an alternative arrangement with the Finance and Administration Unit within sixty (60) days of the date of the original invoice may be suspended thereafter.

3.2.3 If an accredited organisation pays all outstanding amounts within the three (3) months immediately after the suspension, it shall be re-instated.

3.2.3 Should an accredited organisation fail to pay all outstanding amounts during the suspension period of three (3) months, it shall have its accreditation withdrawn. A new application with all associated costs will need to be submitted to NiNAS in order to be re-instated. The application shall also be considered for the purpose of initial accreditation.



3.2.4 In addition to the above cost for new application, the accredited organisation shall be liable for the outstanding fees from its previous accreditation/compliant status prior to its application being processed.

3.3 Withdrawal of Accreditation

3.3.1 Withdrawal of accreditation of an accredited organisation may be voluntary. An organisation requesting for voluntary withdrawal of accreditation is required to give ninety (90) days' written notice to NiNAS stating their reasons. This period of notice may be reduced in exceptional circumstances by mutual agreement.

3.3.2 Decision on enforced withdrawal of accreditation shall be made by the DG/CEO on the recommendation of the Director of Accreditation.

3.3.2.1 Withdrawal of accreditation may result from:

- a) Failure of an organisation to correct nonconformities as a result of an assessment or investigation of a complaint during the period of suspension and without a request for extension of suspension.
- b) Failure of an organisation to settle outstanding fees during a suspension period and without a request for extension of suspension.
- c) Failure of an organisation to demonstrate adequate verification of data during a period of suspension due to change of physical location and without a request for extension of suspension.
- d) The absence of technical signatories for the relevant scopes of accreditation which could not be rectified during the period of suspension.
- e) Failure of an organisation to comply with the terms of the NiNAS' F 072A (Application for Accreditation).
- f) Where there is evidence of fraudulent behavior of the CAB when it intentionally provides false information or conceals information.

3.4 OBLIGATIONS OF AN ACCREDITED ORGANISATION UNDER SUSPENSION, REDUCTION OR WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

3.4.1 An accredited organisation shall, upon suspension or withdrawal of NiNAS' accreditation, immediately discontinue its use of any reference to its accreditation. In the case of partial suspension, reports shall clearly identify the scopes for which accreditation cannot be claimed.

3.4.2 The CAB shall inform its affected clients of the suspension, reduction or withdrawal of its accreditation and the associated consequences without undue delay.



3.4.3 Once an accredited organisation has been placed on suspension or its accreditation withdrawn for any reasons as stipulated in sub-sections 3.2 and 3.3, the organisation’s accreditation status, including the applicable dates of the suspension or withdrawal of the applicable scope(s) will be updated accordingly. The withdrawal status of the CAB will be displayed on the NiNAS website.

3.4.4 An organisation may not be suspended for longer than three (3) months without the written authorization of the DG/CEO. It is the organisation’s responsibility to apply in writing with valid reasons to the DG/CEO for an extension to the initial period of three (3) months. Failure to do this may result in withdrawal of accreditation resulting in the facility having to re-apply for accreditation as a new applicant with the associated costs and penalties.

3.4.5 All costs associated with implementing suspension shall be charged to the account of the accredited CAB. Accredited CABs remain liable for the payment of all fees while under suspension. If the withdrawal of accreditation has occurred within the first six (6) months of the financial year, and if they have not been assessed yet in the current financial year, then a pro-rata percentage of their annual fees are still due to NiNAS.

3.4.6 NiNAS does not refund any fees, either in part or in full, to the facilities that have been suspended or whose accreditation has been withdrawn.

3.5 Re-instatement of Suspended Organisations

3.5.1 Once an organisation has satisfactorily addressed the issues which resulted in the suspension of accreditation, its accreditation may be re-instated on approval by the DG/CEO, depending on the reason for the suspension.

3.5.2 A facility that is in suspension may be required to have an on-site assessment. A positive recommendation is required prior to re-instatement of accreditation. The extent of this assessment will be determined by the Director of Accreditation based on the reasons for suspension and the associated risk. The accredited facility shall bear all associated costs.

3.5.3 Prior to re-instatement, the Director of Accreditation shall notify the Finance and Administration Unit of the re-instatement in order to ensure that all outstanding fees have been paid.



3.5.4 Re-instatement after withdrawal of accreditation will require the organisation to re-apply for accreditation and the entire process followed as for a new application. The previous accreditation number will remain obsolete, and the organisation will be issued with a new NiNAS accreditation.

3.5.5 NiNAS will send notification of re-instatement to the organisation detailing the scope the re-instatement applies to.

3.5.6 Details and certificate of the organisation will be restored on the NiNAS website.

3.6 Follow-up Actions

An accredited organisation may choose to appeal an action taken by NiNAS (See Procedure 9 - Complaints, Appeals and Disputes). In such cases suspensions and withdrawals remain in effect until the Appeal Process is completed and a decision is rendered.

4.0 Forms

Table: 8-1 Forms in use with Procedure 8	
Form Number	Title
F-8-001	Notification of Voluntary Action
F-8-002	Notice of Action of (partial or complete) Suspension
F-8-003	Notice of Action of (partial or complete) Withdrawal

Modification No/Date	Proposed by	Page No.	Summary of Modification
30/04/2020	Quality Manager	All	a) A comprehensive modification to accommodate different scenarios that could



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			lead to suspension, reduction and withdrawal of accreditation. b) Inclusion of the process for the re-instatement of a suspended organisation.
01/04/2023	Quality	All	Updated to address some of the findings identified during the 2023 internal audit

5.0 Document History