

Interim Policy regarding Audits, Audit-Related Travel and Coronavirus

This Policy was adopted by the ASI Board on 6 March 2020

1. What is the scope of this Policy?

ASI recognises that the COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation is evolving rapidly. ASI places a high priority on health and safety through the ASI Performance Standard, and likewise aims to ensure that our employees, contractors and stakeholders work and meet safely. As of early March 2020, we are not yet aware of major impact on the scheduling, execution and completion of ASI Audits, however this may soon change.

This interim policy, adopted by the ASI Board, clarifies the reasonable accommodations that can be made to audit plans in consideration of the current COVID-19 situation.

The policy is applicable to ASI Members and ASI Accredited Auditing Firms and is overseen by the ASI Secretariat.

2. ASI Members with an upcoming ASI Performance Standard Certification deadline – extensions

Members in the 'Production and Transformation' and 'Industrial Users' classes must achieve ASI Certification against the applicable requirements of the ASI Performance Standard for at least one Facility, Program or Product within two years of joining ASI.

In the ASI Assurance Manual (section 3.5), it is noted that in exceptional circumstances, a 6 month extension to a Member's two year deadline may be considered for 'force majeure' situations.

Where COVID-19 creates unacceptable risks or prevents travel by ASI Auditors to carry out ASI Audits, this will be considered a 'force majeure' situation.

Note that the ASI Assurance Manual requires in addition that in order for an extension to be granted by the ASI Secretariat, evidence of progress by the ASI Member on their Self Assessment will be required.

To seek an extension, ASI Members should notify the ASI Secretariat of the above issue and nominate the relevant Self Assessment ID they have been working on in *elementAI*. Questions and requests should be directed through the *elementAI* Help Desk or to info@aluminium-stewardship.org

3. ASI Members and ASI Accredited Auditing Firms with an upcoming ASI Audit scheduled soon

If the ASI Member or ASI Accredited Auditor determines that the risks of on-site auditing and/or associated travel are too high for an upcoming ASI Audit due to the COVID-19 situation, the following options may be considered:

- a) The ASI Audit can be postponed for an agreed period, until the risks can be re-assessed.
 - o This may be appropriate where it is a Certification Audit that does not relate to a membership deadline situation addressed in section 2 or is otherwise not time-critical.
- b) The on-site component of the ASI Audit can be postponed, with desktop reviews carried out where possible.

- This may be relevant where an ASI Audit is seen to be time-critical, or where the non-site aspects of an ASI can be usefully progressed.
 - Interim reporting of the desktop review component may be uploaded, and if appropriate, submitted to ASI through the *elementAI* Audit Report process.
 - Audit Exclusions, Audit Limitations or parts of the Audit Plan not completed must be specifically noted with the ‘force majeure’ reasons explained.
 - For a Certification Audit, the ASI Accredited Auditor could recommend Provisional Certification on the basis of the desktop review component where appropriate, with a Surveillance Audit scheduled at a later date to address the on-site component.
- c) For Surveillance Audits, the ASI Audit can be carried out by desktop review where permitted under Table 11 in the ASI Assurance Manual.
- Where a previously identified Non-Conformance was unable to be closed by an ASI Member due to the COVID-19 situation, this should be noted.
- d) For Scope Change Audits, particularly for the Chain of Custody Standard, or for Industrial User members applying the Performance Standard, desktop reviews could replace the on-site component if feasible.

The ASI Secretariat must be notified of any proposed or agreed changes to the planned audit cycle for an ASI Audit. Questions and notifications of timing changes for specific ASI Audits, from either ASI Members or ASI Accredited Auditors, should be done through the Help Desk in *elementAI*, referring to the relevant Self Assessment or Audit ID.

4. What components of an ASI Audit can be undertaken by desktop review?

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Mandatory Document MD5: 2019¹ notes that:

- *Certification Audits may include remote auditing techniques such as interactive web-based collaboration, web meetings, teleconferences and/or electronic verification of the client’s processes. ... These activities shall be identified in the audit plan and the time spent on these activities may be considered as contributing to the total duration of management systems audits.*

For ASI Audits:

- The time spent on remote/desktop activities may count towards the audit on-site time outlined in section 5.8 of the ASI Assurance Manual.
- Objective evidence that can be reviewed remotely includes documentation and some testimonials. For example interviews of management, staff/workers and stakeholders may be possible and appropriate, depending on access to web-based communications (or similar) and the health of the individuals. General principles for interviewing in the ASI Assurance Manual still apply.
- Objective evidence that cannot be reviewed remotely is observation evidence. Verification of on-site implementation, process control and risk control where relevant in applicable ASI Standards cannot be audited using remote audit techniques.

Any specific questions on these guidelines should be raised through the *elementAI* Help Desk.

5. Updates to this policy

We thank all stakeholders for their commitment to ASI and careful consideration of health and safety risks. Further updates to this policy will be considered in light of evolving circumstances, and communicated accordingly.

General questions should be directed to info@aluminium-stewardship.org

¹ <https://www.iaf.nu/upFiles/IAF%20MD5%20Issue%204%20Version%202%2011112019.pdf>