Dear All

Q-CERT is constantly following the current developments in the coronavirus (Covid 19) guidelines of the World and National Health Organizations, the guidelines issued by our Accreditation Bodies (ESYD, ACCREDIA), the Scheme Owners Guides for FSSC22000, BRC, IFS, GLOBALG.AP, QS) and with regard to the safety of its affiliates and the smooth operation of the certification procedures informs you with the following:

1. Customers shall complete and send us the form **F-2537** form available on our website

2. On the basis of the information in the form F-2537, a risk analysis will be carried out by our competent personnel and a decision will be taken on the actions to be followed on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the instructions issued by the aforementioned organizations, as appropriate, as described in Annex 01 of procedure OP-2210 and taking into account the company's risk category by activity and certified standard as specified in the OP-2051 ANNEX 01 form.

   Note: Proper completion of Form F-2537 is of outmost importance as it contains all the necessary information (as defined by IAF ID3: 2011 and the current situation) which form the basis for conducting the risk assessment.

   Follow Up Actions

A. For the **FSSC 22000, BRC, IFS, GLOBALG.A.P., QS** standards the actions are specified by the Instructions issued by the Scheme Owners (the instructions are available in our web page or there is a link to the scheme and are updated as necessary).

B. For the eIDAS standard, the actions are set out in the guide issued by our Accreditation Body (ACCREDIA) which is available on our website.

Γ. For standards / directives that fall under the requirements of ISO / IEC 17021-1: 2015, ISO / IEC 17020: 2012 & ISO / IEC 17065: 2012 and in our scope of accreditation by ESYD, the audit process is conducted in accordance to the guidance posted on ESYD's website (our guide is almost identical):

1. FOR INITIAL AUDITS

Given the current emergency conditions, it is possible to carry out an initial audit, using the remote audit technique and by reviewing information and data submitted by the audited, and completing the on-site audit once the conditions for the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted, and as soon as it is possible to move to restricted areas and businesses operate. " In order to carry out the above procedure, Q-CERT will submit a written request to ESYD accompanied by a risk analysis, prior to carrying out the remote data and data desk audit and / or evaluation.

Important: Even in the case that ESYD approves the carrying out of the initial audit entirely remotely and by reviewing information and data with a documented risk analysis, the obligation to carry out the on-site audit is not waived, but shifted over time when pandemic conditions permit it.

ESYD will review the request for remote initial certification and will approve or reject the request within 10 (ten) working days.

In the case of approval by ESYD, a conditional certification decision may be documented and shall be based as stated above on a documented risk analysis that relates to the standard and risk of the business activities and respective certified scope.

As a result of the audit will be implemented in two phases, the first phase with the remote audit / desktop review, and the second phase with the completion of the on-site audit as soon as the pandemic conditions allow it).

2. FOR SURVEILLANCE AUDITS

Surveillance audits should be completed as soon as possible (with on-site audit) once the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted and as soon as it is possible to move to restricted areas and businesses are operational. The process of surveillance audits should be completed no later than six months after the deadline for their implementation under the original three-year program and by 2020, if the conditions of the pandemic allow it.

If risk analysis and each risk involved is assessed to be low risk, surveillance audits may be carried out by the auditor and by reviewing information and data remotely. In case of low risk companies, and based on data and evidence collected by Q-CERT, a decision to maintain the validity of the certificate, may be taken.

Therefore, all low risk assessed cases, the surveillance audit can be proceeded based on data and information collected as a remote audit and desktop review

Attention: The remote audit does not relieve the customer from the onsite audit but it only removes it chronologically to a time where conditions will allow it

If a remote audit is not possible due to COVID imposed cease of operations, then a six month extension of the certificate is possible

Within this six month time there will be:

A remote audit and desktop review and the onsite audit will be implemented that will lead to the certificate issue

If the six month time passes and the site audit and the rest of processes will not be implemented then a certificate withdrawal will take place.

3. FOR RECERTIFICATION AUDITS

Re-certification audits should be completed as soon as possible (with onsite audit) once the conditions for the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted and as soon as moving to restricted access areas is allowed and businesses are operational. The recertification audit process should be completed no later than six months after the deadline for its implementation under the original three-year program and by 2020 if the pandemic conditions allow.

If risk analysis and each risk involved is assessed to be low risk, re-certification audits may be carried out by the auditor and by reviewing information and data remotely. In case of low risk companies, and based on data and evidence collected by Q-CERT, a decision to renew the validity of the certificate, may be taken.

As a result of the audit will be implemented in two phases, the first phase with the remote audit / desktop review, and the second phase with the completion of the on-site audit as soon as the pandemic conditions allow it). The remote audit does not relieve the customer from the onsite audit but it only removes it chronologically to a time where conditions will allow it

If a remote audit is not possible due to COVID imposed cease of operations, then a six month extension of the certificate is possible

Within this six month time there will be:

A remote audit and desktop review and the onsite audit will be implemented that will lead to the certificate issue

If the six month time passes and the site audit and the rest of processes will not be implemented then a certificate withdrawal will take place.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS

✓ Conformity assessment activities performed by Q-CERT, which relate to products that fall under the New Approach Directives and require CE marking ie compulsory sector products, national legislation requiring audits (initial, periodic, unscheduled etc.). .) agri-food products (organic etc.) and any other type of products requiring labeling will definitely be carried out on-site audit at the manufacturer's / producer's / user's premises, etc. with the physical presence of the audit team as above.

- ✓ Also the audit cannot be completed on the basis of data / evidence collected from the Remote audit / desk review phase on standards such as:

  ISO22000, ISO45001/OHSAS18001 (medium & high-risk activities),

  ISO14001 (medium & high risk activities),

  ISO 22716, ISO 50001, ISO/IEC 27001, ΕΛΟΤ EN 15224, ISO 13485 (medium & high risk activities)

- ✓ In all cases ESYD shall be notified in a documented way

- ✓ The classification of high/medium risk activities is based on IAF documents and ESYD guides per standard

- ✓ The audits and inspections in production sites, warehouses, accounting offices, assembly areas and any other area critical to the audit integrity, shall be conducted with the physical presence of the audit team

- ✓ Q-CERT shall inform ESYD on the last day of each month the number of audits conducted remotely

- ✓ Q-CERT shall inform ESYD on the last day of each month the list of audits conducted and remain certified under the special COVID-19 procedure

- ✓ All of the customer, as such, shall be subject to unscheduled or unannounced assessments if required. Q-CERT shall provide to ESYD auditors any requests for tickets, tolls, gas receipts, or anything else required to prove the implementation of the requirements of the onsite audits

We urge you to visit our web frequently and also the web sites of ESYD, ACCREDIA, FSSC 22000, BRC, IFS, GLOBALG.A.P., QS and other as necessary.