



Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI) and Foundation FSSC

Endorsed Scheme Agreement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Foundation FSSC** (hereafter referred to as FSSC) is the scheme owner of the worldwide-operated FSSC Schemes which has sought and received endorsement of their schemes listed in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (hereafter referred to as “the Scheme(s)”) as a sub-scope of the Global ACI Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) in accordance with Global ACI MRA-003 and this Agreement.
- 1.2 The Schemes require Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to be accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is a signatory to the Global ACI MRA with a main scope of management system certification and a sub-scope of the Scheme(s) included in Schedule 1 to this Agreement (Global ACI MRA signatories).
- 1.3 FSSC is the global non-profit and independent scheme owner, based in Den Bosch, the Netherlands, that aims to provide trust and deliver impact to the consumer goods industry.
- 1.4 FSSC contracts at the time of this Agreement with over 130 CABs worldwide under the Schemes, the supervision of which is carried out by the ABs that are signatories to the Global ACI MRA.
- 1.5 The requirements for the professional competence of auditors are defined in the relevant scheme documents.
- 1.6 FSSC requires CABs to be accredited by ABs that are signatories to the Global ACI MRA that have ISO/IEC 17021-1 in their MRA scope.
- 1.7 The Schemes provide the standard and framework for independent, recognised third-party management system certification.
- 1.8 **The Global ACI** is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies in the fields of management systems, products, services, process, persons, validation and verification; testing (including medical testing/examination), calibration, provision of proficiency testing, production of reference materials, and biobanking; inspection activities and other similar programs of conformity assessment.
- 1.9 Global ACI is responsible for the harmonisation and continuous improvement of the accreditation practices of its members with the ultimate goal to ensure sound technical competence of accredited CABs; Certification Bodies (CBs), Verification and Validation Bodies (V&VBs), laboratories, and inspection bodies, and to support its Global ACI MRA.

- 1.10 The Global ACI MRA is established and maintained on the basis of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 through regular peer evaluations and is the tool by which Global ACI contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to promoting the free circulation of conformity assessment attestations issued by accredited CABs.

2. Administration and Cooperation

- 2.1 Both Global ACI and FSSC by means of this formal Agreement, have decided to develop and maintain a close cooperation between the two organisations to ensure harmonisation in the accreditation practices performed by Global ACI members for the Schemes and to cooperate in the continuous improvement of the Schemes with the final goal of assuring the highest level of competence in the Schemes' accredited CABs.
- 2.2 The Global ACI and FSSC shall comply with the respective requirements of *Global ACI MRA-003 Policies and Procedures for the Management and Expansion of the Scope of the Global ACI Arrangement*, operating and administrating in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of CABs or ABs other than relevant technical considerations.
- 2.3 The Schemes will be open to all CABs that are accredited by signatories to the Global ACI MRA. The ABs will be signatory members of the Global ACI MRA for Management Systems.
- 2.4 FSSC will only work with ABs that are signatories to the Global ACI MRA. FSSC will stop working with an AB that is no longer a signatory to the Global ACI MRA for Management Systems.
- 2.5 Both Global ACI and FSSC shall appoint a liaison person of each organisation to act as contact persons.

3. Information Exchange

To achieve such goals both organisations have agreed upon the following:

- 3.1 FSSC shall inform the Global ACI of the following:
- a) Changes to any of the Schemes listed in Schedule 1, that may impact compliance with Global ACI MRA-003.
 - b) Any revision/extension to the Scheme(s)' standards/documents.
 - c) Outcomes from any AB workshop held by FSSC on one or more of the Schemes.
 - d) Feedback FSSC may have regarding the Global ACI MRA signatory ABs.
 - e) Change in the status as recognised schemes (GFSI/SSCI).
- 3.2 The Global ACI shall inform FSSC of the following:
- a) When a Global ACI MRA signatory with a sub-scope of one or more of the Schemes has been suspended or had their Global ACI MRA signatory status withdrawn.
 - b) Any general or technical questions regarding the interpretation of the Schemes' standards/documents.
 - c) Changes in policy, procedure or documentation that may have impact on the Global ACI MRA and Schemes' sub-scope.

4. Mandatory Interpretation of the Scheme Documents

- 4.1 The Schemes' documents shall be prepared using the FSSC Scheme Development Procedure for the setting and revision of Schemes' documentation.

This shall include a stakeholder consultation phase comprising of comment submissions by interested parties each lasting a specified timeframe with feedback being provided to organisations that made the comment.

- 4.2 The Global ACI will be included as a stakeholder and invited during any stakeholder consultation period of the Schemes' revision process.
- 4.3 The Schemes' documents shall be available at no cost on the FSSC website (www.fssc.com).
- 4.4 FSSC will provide new draft Scheme version document(s) with a gap analysis and proposed transition plan for implementation of the new version documents to Global ACI as soon as a technically sound new version is available in order to make sure, that the new scheme version continues to comply with the requirements of Global ACI MRA-003. FSSC accepts the process to be followed according to Global ACI MRA-003 for Global ACI MRA sub-scope inclusion of new versions of the Schemes.
- 4.5 The need for the development of specific Global ACI application documents shall be proposed by the Global ACI applicable Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the Global ACI MRA Committee as specified in Global ACI MRA-003.
- 4.6 The Schemes endorsed as Global ACI MRA sub-scopes are included in the relevant Global ACI MRA status lists. After the end of the transition period to a new scheme version the old version will not be published as Global ACI MRA sub-scopes anymore.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 Global ACI and FSSC shall each bear their own costs.
- 5.2 The Schemes will be included as a sub-scope under the main scope of Management System Certification, ISO/IEC 17021-1.

Those ABs currently providing accreditations to one or more of the Schemes will automatically be able to apply for a Global ACI MRA scope extension for the relevant scheme(s) through provision of a signed self-declaration through their Regional Accreditation Group (RAG) once the Agreement is signed.

- 5.3 The revision of the implementation of this Agreement is in the scope of the MRA peer evaluation to the Global ACI Management System MRA signatories working in one or more of the Schemes.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 The Global ACI shall hold all Confidential Information in strictest confidence and shall only use it for the purpose for which it was provided and shall not disclose or make available any Confidential Information to any third party without the prior written consent of FSSC.

7. Term

- 7.1 This Agreement shall commence from the original Date of Signing and, unless terminated earlier according to clause 8, continues indefinitely.

8. Cancellation

- 8.1 This Agreement between FSSC and the Global ACI can be cancelled by either party in writing with a period of notice of three months.

SCHEDULE 1

FSSC Schemes endorsed for inclusion as sub-scopes to the Global ACI MRA:

1. FSSC 22000 Scheme for Food Safety Management System Certification

Level 1 - FSSC 22000

Version 6.0 and Version 7.0 Scheme, Part 5

Level 4 - ISO/TS 22003:2013 (ISO 22003-1:2022)

FSSC 22000 Version 6.0 and Version 7.0 Scheme, Parts 3 and 4

Level 5 - FSSC 22000 Version 6.0 and Version 7.0 Scheme, Part 2

2. FSSC 24000 Scheme for Social Management System Certification

Level 1 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Version



1.0, Part 5

Level 4 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Version

1.0, Parts 3 and 4

Level 5 - FSSC 24000 Scheme Version

1.0, Part 2

Global ACI	Foundation FSSC
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Note: Issue 1, Version 1.