DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING OF KPIs IN FOOD-RELATED CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This informative document provides suggestions about how to effectively develop and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) internally developed or pre-defined through another entity.

1.1.2 This document is based upon the IAF (International Accreditation Forum) document IAF ID 16:2025 *Development and Monitoring of KPIs in Food-Related Certification Schemes*. On the transfer of the role of IAF to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI), the text has been reformatted to be a Global ACI document without any substantive change to the text.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This informative document is applicable to the development, methodology, and monitoring of the KPIs applicable to operations of certification bodies (CBs) operating in food schemes.

1.2.2 The use of KPIs in the food-related accredited certification schemes by the CBs may be on a voluntary basis, by mutual agreement, or may be initiated by the accreditation body (AB) or a scheme owner (or other interested parties) to investigate specific situations triggered by adverse trends (including the indicators that are identified by the CB) or market feedback.

1.2.3 The objective of the methodology described in this informative document is to make the certification and accreditation process more effective and efficient, by the use of a "Plan-Do-Check-Act" approach. This means that the output of KPI monitoring could be used to provide input into the planning of internal activity (e.g. internal audit), CB audits of certified clients, oversight activities by the AB (including the frequency and duration of office assessments and witness assessments: ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Clause 7.9.2) as well as integrity programs oversight by the scheme owners.

1.2.4 Monitoring by accreditation bodies or other entities is an option for a uniform and collaborative approach in monitoring of the CBs' operations in food-related certification schemes (programs).

1.2.5 This Global ACI informative document reflects the consensus of Global ACI members on this subject and is intended to support the consistent application of requirements. However, being a document for information purposes only, Global ACI Accreditation Body Members, and the Conformity Assessment Bodies they accredit, are not under any obligation to use or comply with anything in this document.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Definitions from ISO/IEC 17000:2020 apply.

2.2 Indicator as defined in Global ACI-TECH-3-012:

– A trend or a fact that indicates the state or a level of certification activities.

Note: Could be used as a tool to determine how well an organisation meets the requirements of a given food-related certification scheme.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The primary objective of the document is to provide guidance on the development and monitoring of KPIs.

3.2 The document provides guidance on how to develop methodical and well-defined KPIs that would provide a level of confidence in the AB's accreditation and CB's certification and improve the overall confidence and credibility of the accredited third-party certification process.

3.3 The document also provides guidance on best approach for monitoring of KPIs. The process described in this document could be used not only by ABs, but also by any duly authorised interested party including (but not limited to):

- The CBs themselves (e.g. CB's head office responsible for overall oversight over operations)
- Regulators/Scheme recognition entities (e.g. to investigate specific concerns that call into question the validity of accredited certification)
- Customers of certified organisations (e.g. when there are indications that their certified supplier is not fulfilling the requirements of the relevant accredited certification)
- Sector schemes/scheme owners (e.g. to provide additional confidence in the scheme)

Note: Private sector entities use terminology that may not always align with ISO definitions. An example is the use of the term Certification Program Owner (CPO) by the GFSI to designate a scheme owner.

4. DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING OF KPIS

When developing KPIs and any associated thresholds the following should be considered.

4.1 KPIs may be developed by various entities, including but not limited to:

- Accreditation Bodies
- Certification Bodies
- Customers
- Scheme owners/Certification Program owners
- Industry associations
- Industry stakeholders
- Regulatory authorities

Note: Concepts discussed in this document could be applicable to KPIs regardless of the source of their development.

4.2 Reasons for development of KPIs vary by the organisation. Some of the common triggers may include:

- Requirements of a scheme

- The need to better monitor overall operational performance
- Issues raised by media organisations regarding a particular product, organisation or accredited CB, with relation to specific technical areas or overall performance
- Problems identified through social media
- Specific feedback from non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- A want or need to safeguard a stable accreditation or accredited certification process
- Feedback from a scheme owner or a benchmarking entity
- Indication of poor performance, as evidenced by, for example, high levels of product recalls

Note: In regulated programs ABs may need to establish feedback mechanisms with regulatory authorities to ensure that they are made aware of trends in non-compliances with legislation.

4.3 Availability of quality and accurate data is key for the development of an effective measurement of performance.

4.4 KPIs should be applicable to the overall operations of the certification body and requirements of the food-related certification schemes should be taken into consideration.

4.5 Each KPI should have a specific objective, as well as be attainable and have measurable parameters.

4.6 The applicable KPIs may include:

i. % of audits conducted by auditors approved in the audit scope

ii. % of certificates withdrawn within a defined timeframe

iii. Consistency of the audit reports, including technical aspects

iv. Timeliness of the certification decision

v. Audit time duration is appropriately assigned

vi. Communication of product recalls to the appropriate parties

vii. Trends in nonconformance with any of the requirements (internal or external such as accreditation)

viii. Trends in noncompliance with legislation

ix. Reliability of the suppliers

4.7 Methods used to develop monitoring parameters should have clear explanations.

Any sampling should have a clear justification why a specific sampling plan was developed.

4.8 A scale indication of acceptability/non-acceptability should be considered to provide a CB with triggers on when activities are to be monitored or immediate action is needed.

4.9 The thresholds identified should be attainable. The limit, and if applicable, the scale should be agreed on by the majority of the directly involved personnel.

4.10 A balanced representation of personnel involved, internal and external, should have input into the development of KPIs; only through a collaborative approach can value-added KPIs be developed.

4.11 Those impacted should not necessarily agree on the established KPIs. However, information provided on the established KPIs should be transparent and complete, including any applicable clear thresholds as well as consequences. This information should be clearly communicated to everyone involved, including those doing the actual work as well as the overall decision maker to ensure understanding of the reason behind a specific KPI and an overall impact.

4.12 The monitoring timeframe should be defined for each KPI. The timeframe should be appropriate for each KPI to ensure quantity and quality of the data obtained for a reliable result to allow detection and correction of negative trends and reinforcement of positive trends.

5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

5.1 A monitoring system should be developed specifically for each KPI and performance of the CB against the pre-defined KPIs should be subject to monitoring in accordance with a predefined timeframe.

5.2 Monitoring may be conducted through various methods, including but not limited to:

- Part of a scheduled assessment or external audit such as:
    - AB’s assessment
    - Peer assessments/evaluations
    - Internal audits
    - Scheme owner oversight
    - Customer audits
    - Self-assessment
- Through a monitoring activity dedicated to a specific KPI
- Internal analysis (e.g. Management review) and improvement plans where applicable

5.3 It is helpful to have information system tools that provide automatic feedback about the accomplishment of the KPIs with clear dashboards and proactive communication that can be accessed by those involved at any time.

5.4 It is recommended that the CB establishes a clear process for self-assessment reporting, independent verification, reconfiguration, and improvement for accuracy.

6. AMENDMENT TABLE

Section	Previous Version	Summary of Changes
All	-	Initial issue of Global ACI document