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OFFICIAL NOTICE
IOAS Assessment and Surveillance and Coronavirus COVID-19
March 13, 2020 – updated June 30, 2020

Dear CBs,

As you can see, we first issued this notice in March and have been updating monthly. To date we have been simply informing that IOAS planning for on-site visits have been moved to remote looking two months ahead. Remote assessment of CB offices has been going well but it does not fully replace on-site, face to face work and we have been unable to do witness or review audits of operators, although we expect to do some first 'remote' operator visits in early July. Scheme owners are understandably concerned that we meet our obligations by adapting where we can.

Different countries are at different stages of the pandemic ranging from worsening conditions and increased restrictions to some countries where domestic and even cross border travel is permitted **so it is now possible to consider our schedule with CBs on a case by case basis**. Concern for public health and the well-being of your personnel, that of your clients, and our own team remains a priority but, like everybody, we are looking to balance that with ensuring we continue our work. We continue to post expectations of scheme owners and any updates regularly on our web site.

In our last update on May 31, 2020 we informed that on-site visits planned up until the end of August 2020 are being rearranged as remote surveillance (maintaining the dates as far as possible) and therefore without witness or review operator visits. We are informing here that visits planned after **September 1, 2020** will be organised on a case by case basis as (preferably) being physically present on site but if not, then remote depending on the in-country conditions and the possibilities for IOAS personnel to travel. Where possible we will make the most of our assessors close to you to reduce travel as much as we can and we are also looking at the possibility of contracting local assessors either independently or via local ABs. We continue to explore technology options to facilitate witness audits.

Your Client Manager will contact you and seek your help in confirming travel possibilities and, if necessary, alternatives for operator visits we may have planned to adjust to others where restrictions have been lifted and it is safe for all concerned.

- For CBs with re-assessment or surveillance planned from September 1, 2020 we will perform all activities on-site where possible. This may still result in a remote office visit and postponing operator site visits until a later date;
- For CBs that have already had their remote office visit, we will be looking to organise witness or review audits at operator sites through whichever of the above approaches can work;
- We will need your close collaboration and information from all of you to help us achieve this;
- We will delay purchasing tickets until we are as certain as possible that the visit can go ahead with everybody's agreement.;

- If for some reason neither a visit nor a remote audit is possible during 2020, we will refer to our PL0510 Policy on dangerous situations and PL0522 Emergency exceptions granting policy. This will allow the IOAS to grant exceptions for the visit in extreme cases. Instead we will require the CB to submit information to allow IOAS to conduct a desk audit to support the continuation of accreditation by IOAS. This option may be subject to scheme owner restriction;
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to grant accreditation for new applications if circumstances do not allow us to make an on-site visit to the CB office and conduct the necessary operator site visits. We will however give priority to new applications to avoid such circumstances. The need for operator visits as part of extensions of scope will be required according to our normal policy.

We are committed to being even-handed with CBs in applying the different approaches over time. For example, CBs in circumstances where we are unable to complete the required surveillance in 2020 may be subject to additional activities in 2021/22 etc.

This is additional work for us as well as for you, so we seek your understanding and cooperation under these special circumstances. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Client Manager in the first instance.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Crucefix', with a horizontal line underneath.

David Crucefix PhD
Executive Director

