



ASI Accreditation Procedure

ASI-PRO-20-101-Accreditation-V4.3

Approved by: Managing Director

Date of approval: 23 April 2019

Accreditation Procedure

ASI-PRO-20-101 - Version 4.3

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1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This procedure specifies the process to be followed by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) including requirements regarding the accreditation application process, initial accreditation and re-accreditation. It also covers accreditation processes such as scope extension and reduction, suspension and withdrawal of accreditation, as well as transfer of accreditation.
- 1.2 This procedure is applicable to all accredited programs managed by ASI.

2 CHANGE HISTORY

Version number	Date of approval (Effective date)	Description of changes
1.0	unknown	First publication
2.0	26/02/2009	Minor corrections
3.0	11/08/2010	Minor corrections to reflect changes in the organizational structure, flow charts
3.1	31/01/2012	Minor corrections
4.0	30/04/2014	Major review: Separation of CAB requirements from ASI internal instructions, incorporation of the reviewed ASI procedure for extension, reduction, suspension and termination of accreditation, publication of assessment reports, inclusion of re-accreditation requirements, requirements on how to lift suspension and requirements for transfer of accreditation, change of terminology to reflect ISO language (e.g. withdrawal), removal of flow charts.
4.1	16/03/2018	Formatting changes; no content changes.
4.2	17 January 2019	Logo and name updated; no content changes.
4.3	23 April 2019	Change in clause 9.2.2 to match new definition of Affiliate Offices in the ASI Glossary published on 23.04.2019. Addition of clarification in parenthesis in clause 11.4.B.

3 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 All terms and definitions are provided in the ASI Glossary.

4 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

4.1	Standards and Policies	ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Applicable certification schemes' accreditation requirements
4.2	Procedures, Guidelines	ASI-PRO-20-107-ASI Glossary ASI-PRO-20-105-Surveillance & Sampling ASI-PRO-20-104-Complaints ASI-PRO-20-103-Appeals ASI-PRO-20-106-Assessment Findings ASI-GUI-20-105-Witnessing ASI-POL-20-108-ASI Trademark Requirements Applicable ASI Fee Schedules
4.3	Checklists, Templates, etc.	ASI/CAB Accreditation Agreements ASI-TPL-20-102-Accreditation Application Form

5 GENERAL ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The requirements for accreditation are defined in the normative documents of the respective certification scheme and ASI's accreditation requirements, including the ASI/CAB accreditation agreement.
- 5.2 ASI shall not rely upon the results of accreditations issued by other accreditation bodies. ASI may consider the results of independent assessments of CAB conformity against relevant standards but shall not be bound by the findings of other accreditation bodies.

6 APPLICATION FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION

- 6.1 Information about the ASI application process, including the application form, is available on the ASI website (www.asi-assurance.org).
- 6.2 Generic application requirements (Step 1):
 - 6.2.1 The applicant CAB shall be a legal entity that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation.
 - 6.2.2 The applicant CAB shall complete the application form in English and submit it to asi-info@asi-assurance.org. Application documents, as requested in the application form, should be in English. ASI accepts application documents in other languages if appropriate for the applicant CABs geographic scope of accreditation, and if ASI has the required language skills. CABs should note that this may lead to additional translation costs.
 - 6.2.3 ASI shall screen the form and other relevant application documents for completeness. Incomplete application forms may be rejected. Additional costs may apply for reviewing a resubmitted application.
 - 6.2.4 When the application form and other relevant application documents are complete, ASI shall send the ASI/CAB accreditation agreement which shall be printed in two copies, signed, and sent back to ASI for countersignature. ASI shall also send the application invoice.
 - 6.2.5 If, at time of the application, the applicant CAB has not performed any conformity assessment services whatsoever, it shall first be subject to a preliminary visit as described in section 8 of this procedure.
- 6.3 Program specific application requirements (Step 2):
 - 6.3.1 Upon receipt of the signed agreement, and payment of the application fee, ASI shall send the applicant CAB the program specific application forms for completion.
 - 6.3.2 The CAB is required to provide evidence that it has sufficient resources and competence in order to manage the certification program, and specifically the technical and geographical scopes applied for.
 - 6.3.3 Upon receipt of the completed forms and corresponding documentation ASI shall assign the application to an ASI assessor who will conduct a document review of the applicant CAB's forms and system. The ASI assessor should conduct the initial document review within 30 days. The CAB may be required to respond to requests of clarification, information, etc. which may prolong the review beyond 30 days.
 - 6.3.4 If the applicant applies for more than one accreditation program, ASI will aim to combine the document review and future reviews.

- 6.3.5 The applicant CAB shall pay the fee for the review of documentation according to the ASI Fee Schedule.
 - 6.3.6 The applicant CAB shall respond to any requests for clarification, additional documents, information, and nonconformities raised within the timeframes indicated by ASI. If the applicant CAB does not respond to ASI within 6 months, ASI shall send a reminder with a 30 days' timeline. ASI shall withdraw the application if the CAB does not satisfactorily respond within the 30 days' timeline.
 - 6.3.7 Based on the document review conducted by ASI, the applicant CAB shall be sent an assessment report including the findings of the assessment.
- 6.4 When during the application process a CAB notifies ASI of any significant changes in any aspects of its status or operation, as specified in the ASI/CAB Accreditation Agreements, ASI may request the applicant CAB to submit a new application and pay the application fee.
- 6.5 When after the document review the application is deemed complete by ASI and there are no open nonconformities, or open nonconformities are set to be reviewed during the onsite assessments, ASI shall pursue planning the initial onsite assessments in line with section 9 below.
- 6.6 If an applicant CAB is unable to achieve accreditation within two years of ASI's receipt of the application, ASI may place the applicant CAB on "inactive" status. ASI will notify the CAB of the impending change of status approximately ninety days in advance.
- 6.6.1 To return to active status, the CAB shall re-apply, providing any additional documentation ASI deems necessary. ASI may request the applicant CAB to submit a new application and pay the application fee.

7 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ASI ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1 The following requirements are applicable to all types of accreditation assessments (e.g. initial, re-accreditation, surveillance, scope extension).
- 7.2 The assessor or team leader, if the assessment will be conducted by a team, assigned to conduct the assessment will inform the CAB about the type of the assessment and the identity of the ASI assessment team, including technical expert and translator if needed.
- 7.2.1 The CAB may submit an objection in writing concerning any ASI assessment team member, specifying the justified reasons for the objection. ASI shall review the objection, and may propose another person to the assessment team if the objection is deemed justified.
- 7.3 The assessor shall send the estimated budget and assessment agenda to the CAB, including a request for details on logistical arrangements, and any other information required of the CAB to carry out the assessment process. ASI will post all planned assessments on the ASI website, except initial office assessments.
- 7.4 For each assessment, the assessor shall:

- 7.4.1 Prepare and send the summary of findings report to the CAB within 2 working days of the closing meeting;
 - 7.4.2 Invite the CAB to point out any error of fact that may be contained in the summary of findings report within five working days;
 - 7.4.3 Address any errors of fact raised by the CAB in the assessment report;
 - 7.4.4 Send the assessment report for ASI internal technical review and sign off;
 - 7.4.5 Send the final assessment report to the CAB within 30 days of the closing meeting.
- 7.5 CABs have the right to appeal ASI's decisions within thirty (30) days of the accreditation decision made or the final assessment report sent, if the assessment concerns a surveillance assessment, as specified in the [ASI Appeals Procedure](#).
- 7.6 ASI may publish assessment and accreditation reports or parts of it on the ASI website to the extent permitted by the relevant accreditation agreements.
- 7.7 ASI assessments are administered through the ASI Accreditation Management System (AMS).
- 7.7.1 ASI staff and assessors, and the CAB shall maintain and keep up-to-date assessment information in the AMS.
- 7.8 The handling of assessment findings is set out in the [ASI Assessment Findings Procedure](#).
- 7.9 According to the accreditation agreement the CAB is obliged to inform ASI at asi-info@asi-assurance.org or alternatively the ASI assessor who has been assigned to conduct your document review, of all sites where conformity assessment services occur or may occur. This will be evaluated during the document review. However, if some sites, where conformity assessment services occur are only identified during any other assessment, additional assessment activity shall be planned by the assessor so that all sites can be included in the scope of the assessment.
- 7.10 When during the accreditation cycle a CAB notifies ASI of any significant changes, as specified in the ASI/CAB Accreditation Agreements, an assessor shall review the proposed changes and determine if an additional assessment is required. This assessment may be an onsite or off-site assessment.
- 7.11 The CAB shall have enforceable arrangements with affiliate offices, subcontractors and certificate holders being assessed as part of ASI's assessment schedule to ensure ASI access to the premises of the aforementioned entities as well as access to confidential information.
- 7.12 Cost estimates of ASI assessment activities are outlined in the Fee Schedule which can be downloaded from the ASI website. ASI shall send an estimated assessment budget prior to each assessment.

8 PRELIMINARY VISIT

- 8.1 ASI shall conduct preliminary visits at the cost of the applicant CAB in the following situations:

- 8.1.1 If, at time of the application, the applicant CAB has not performed any conformity assessment services whatsoever, it shall first be subject to a preliminary visit.
- 8.1.2 Upon request by an applicant CAB.
- 8.1.3 Upon ASI's discretion and in agreement with the applicant CAB.
- 8.2 ASI shall limit preliminary visit reviews to:
 - 8.2.1 The implementation of the required documented procedures of the applicant CAB; and/or
 - 8.2.2 The competencies of the applicant CAB required in order to manage the respective accreditation program.
- 8.3 ASI shall not provide any advice on how to address issues that constitute barriers to accreditation raised during the visit; neither shall it advise on how other CABs have demonstrated conformity.
- 8.4 ASI shall provide the applicant CAB with a non-binding report outlining any deficiencies identified.

9 INITIAL ASSESSMENTS AND INITIAL ACCREDITATION DECISION PROCESS

- 9.1 During initial assessments the assessment team shall review the CAB's conformance with the respective scheme accreditation requirements relevant to the accreditation program and scope, ASI's accreditation requirements, and the CAB's own procedures.
- 9.2 The initial assessment phase of an applicant CAB consists of the following activities:
 - 9.2.1 Assessment of the "head office" (office legally responsible for any certification decision and where certification decision making takes place), hereafter called "office assessment";
 - 9.2.2 Assessment of affiliate offices that perform one or more key certification activities as defined within the ASI glossary (ASI-INF-20-100).
 - 9.2.3 One witness assessment of a CAB's audit per technical accreditation scope applied for.
 - (A) ASI reserve the right to conduct additional assessments, if deemed necessary. A justification for additional assessments shall be provided.
 - (B) Certain types of CAB audits may not be suitable for an initial witness assessment and ASI therefore reserves the right to reject cases put forward for the purpose of witnessing the CAB's audit. Such cases may be traders or transfer of certificates from one CAB to another.
- 9.3 The applicant CAB shall not:
 - (A) Advertise their status as an ASI applicant,
 - (B) Use the ASI Trademark,
 - (C) Contact any clients for certification for the purpose of advertising their applicant CAB status,

before the office assessment is conducted and any major nonconformities are closed.

9.3.1 ASI places the applicant CAB on the ASI website following the office assessment and closure of any major nonconformities. From that moment onwards, the applicant CAB may advertise their status as an applicant.

9.3.2 The applicant CAB shall not issue any certificates until accreditation has been granted and the accreditation certificate received.

9.4 ASI shall within 30 days prepare an accreditation report for the independent ASI Accreditation Committee when:

- (A) all major nonconformities are satisfactorily addressed;
- (B) the applicant CAB has provided root cause analyses and corrective action plans of all minor nonconformities raised at the initial assessment phase, and these have been reviewed and deemed satisfactory by the ASI assessor.

9.5 If the applicant CAB does not satisfactorily address major nonconformities within a period of twelve months, the application will be withdrawn. ASI may require full re-application in such instances.

9.6 The Accreditation Committee recommendation shall be communicated to the Managing Director (MD) for a final decision. If the MD decides against initial accreditation, ASI shall notify the CAB in writing of the basis of the decision and any next steps on the part of the applicant.

9.7 ASI shall submit its accreditation decision and accreditation report to the CAB no later than thirty days after the submission of the accreditation report to the Accreditation Committee.

9.8 When accreditation is granted, ASI shall issue a certificate of accreditation including the geographic and technical scope, and allow use of the ASI accreditation trademark.

9.8.1 The CAB shall only carry out conformity assessment services within their accredited geographic and technical scope. The CAB shall also ensure that all certificate holder activities and sites are covered by the CAB's geographic and technical scope.

9.9 The applicant CAB shall pay a fee for the services of the Accreditation Committee as set out in the ASI Fee Schedule.

9.10 ASI shall update the list of accredited CABs on ASI's website (www.asi-assurance.org) and notify the certification scheme(s).

10 SURVEILLANCE

10.1 ASI surveillance activities shall be performed in accordance with the [ASI Procedure for Surveillance and Sampling](#).

10.1.1 ASI should plan the first surveillance office assessment within six months from accreditation being granted.

11 RE-ACCREDITATION

- 11.1 Re-accreditation shall be undertaken at least every 5 years.
- 11.2 ASI shall conduct a document review of the CAB's system and program related documentation.
- 11.3 After completion of the document review ASI shall conduct a re-accreditation office assessment of the CAB's complete accredited system at the CAB's head office and those affiliate offices or subcontractors that had not been visited throughout the 5 year accreditation cycle, approximately six months prior to the expiration of the current accreditation. The office assessment shall cover a review of the CAB's conformance with the scheme accreditation requirements relevant to the accreditation program and scope, ASI's accreditation requirements, and the CAB's own procedures.
- 11.4 ASI shall within 30 days prepare the CAB's re-accreditation report for the Accreditation Committee when
 - (A) all major nonconformities are satisfactorily addressed;
 - (B) the CAB has provided root cause analyses and corrective action plans of all minor nonconformities raised at the re-accreditation assessment phase (up to and including the reaccreditation assessment), and these have been reviewed and agreed by ASI.
- 11.5 The CAB shall request an extension of the accreditation certificate at least 30 days before the accreditation certificate lapses, for a period covering the timeline set to satisfactorily address all major nonconformities and provision and review of root cause analysis and corrective action plans of all minor nonconformities.
 - 11.5.1 The application for an extension, including a justification shall be submitted by the CAB in writing to the ASI MD who may decide to extend the certificate;
 - 11.5.2 If the MD approves the extension, the CAB's accreditation status shall be suspended for the duration of the extension.
- 11.6 The Accreditation Committee recommendation shall be communicated to the MD for a decision.
 - 11.6.1 Upon a favorable re-accreditation decision from the MD, ASI shall issue the re-accreditation report and a new certificate of accreditation. Further requirements as set out in section 9.8 shall apply.
 - 11.6.2 If the MD decides against re-accreditation, ASI shall notify the CAB in writing of the basis of the decision, send the re-accreditation report and notify on any next steps on the part of the CAB to initiate withdrawal of accreditation in keeping with section 13 of this procedure.

11.7 ASI shall submit its final re-accreditation decision and accreditation report to the CAB no later than thirty days from the submission of the re-accreditation report to the Accreditation Committee.

11.8 The CAB shall pay a fee for the services of the Accreditation Committee as set out in the ASI Fee Schedule.

12 EXTENSION OR REDUCTION OF ACCREDITATION SCOPES

12.1 The CAB shall submit the application form available on the ASI website (www.asi-assurance.org) for an extension of technical or geographical scope of accreditation.

12.2 If the CAB applies for an extension of technical scope section 6, 7 and 9 shall be applied.

12.3 For geographical scope extensions, the following procedure shall be applied:

12.3.1 ASI shall appoint an assessor to review the application of extension of scope.

12.3.2 The CAB is required to provide evidence that it has sufficient resources in order to manage the geographical scope(s), including human resources, languages, management of affiliate offices or subcontractors, arrangements of liabilities to cover conformity assessment services in the newly proposed countries, etc.

12.3.3 ASI shall complete the assessment report, including a final recommendation for the scope extension, as specified in section 7.4. The recommendation shall be considered by the MD, who makes a final decision on the scope extension.

12.3.4 Upon a favorable scope extension decision from the MD, ASI shall issue a revised certificate including the new geographical scope of accreditation. The expiration date of the certificate shall remain unchanged.

12.4 ASI fees for extension of scope are specified in the ASI Fee Schedule.

12.5 In addition to the requirements included in the relevant accreditation agreement, ASI and a CAB may mutually agree in writing at any time to reduce the scope of accreditation.

12.6 At a surveillance or re-accreditation assessment the ASI assessor may recommend a reduction in the scope of accreditation. Upon such a recommendation, ASI may propose further steps to the CAB including, but not limited to, a mutual agreement of scope reduction, a CAB's voluntary reduction of its scope, or increased ASI assessments of the relevant scope.

12.7 A CAB may voluntarily reduce its accreditation for all or for parts of its scope of accreditation by notifying ASI at asi-info@asi-assurance.org three months in advance of the desired effective date of the reduction of scope. The consequences of a reduction in scope are similar as for a termination (see section 13.10 below).

- 12.8 CABs that voluntarily reduce their scope of accreditation may re-apply for the extension of the scope of accreditation at any time by following the process set out in this section (12).

13 SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION

- 13.1 Any of the following reasons are considered grounds for suspension upon which the suspension process shall be immediately initiated:

- 13.1.1 Detection of a total breakdown of a system that constitutes a risk to the credibility of ASI and/ or a certification scheme;
- 13.1.2 Issuance of five or more major nonconformities within one assessment;
- 13.1.3 Absence of evidence of effective corrective and preventive actions, allowing ASI to close a major nonconformity within the specified timeline;
- 13.1.4 Inability or unwillingness to comply with requests for information, reports, and records that ASI deems necessary to determine continued conformity of a CAB with accreditation requirements;
- 13.1.5 Failure to comply with a request to undergo an ASI assessment;
- 13.1.6 The raising of a major nonconformity during a re-accreditation assessment which may require the CAB to apply for a certificate extension in a suspended state as described in section 11.5.

- 13.2 Suspension of accreditation places restrictions on a CAB's ability to continue to offer and provide accredited certification. Suspension can be for the full scope of accreditation of the CAB or for a part of the scope. The CAB shall

- 13.2.1 not enter into new agreements for certification or perform initial certification services;
- 13.2.2 continue to conduct surveillance audits for existing clients during the period of suspension.

Conduct of re-certification and/or completion of initial certification services started prior to, or planned to be undertaking after the effective date of a suspension shall be subject to explicit written approval by ASI, where there are no requirements to cover this circumstance within the certification scheme requirements.

- 13.3 A suspended CAB shall remain liable for all legal, financial, direct and contingent obligations.

- 13.4 Suspension and withdrawal of accreditation is initiated by formal action of the MD after receipt of a suspension or withdrawal recommendation from the Accreditation Committee, except in the case of an extension of accreditation in a suspended state. If the MD upholds the Accreditation Committee's recommendation, the CAB shall be informed of this decision, including

- 13.4.1 the grounds for, and scope of the decision;
- 13.4.2 the effective date of suspension or withdrawal;
- 13.4.3 the associated limitations and restrictions to be observed by the CAB;
- 13.4.4 ASI's suspension/withdrawal report;
- 13.4.5 in the case of a suspension decision:
 - (A) the suspension duration including the date by which the grounds for the suspension shall be addressed by the CAB;

- (B) the consequences of failing to fully address the grounds for the suspension within the suspension period;
 - (C) the measures ASI will follow to verify conformance in order to revoke the suspension;
- 13.4.6 in the case of a withdrawal, a requirement to pay any fees or outstanding invoices.
- 13.5 Following suspension, ASI shall inform the relevant certification scheme and accredited CABs of the suspension decision including grounds for suspension. ASI reserves the right to make broader market notification of suspension when considered appropriate in ASI's sole discretion.
- 13.6 The MD shall suspend a CAB's accreditation if an invoice remains unpaid 120 days after the invoice date. Suspension shall be lifted by the MD upon receipt of payment. For this type of decision the Accreditation Committee's recommendation is not required.
- 13.7 The period of suspension shall not exceed six months unless specifically authorized by the MD. Failure to demonstrate closing of all major nonconformities or to remedy the causes of suspension within the specified time period shall lead to withdrawal of accreditation.
 - 13.7.1 ASI reserves the right to verify effective implementation of major nonconformities by conducting additional assessments, at the cost of the CAB.
 - 13.7.2 ASI shall continue to conduct surveillance assessments throughout the period of a CAB's suspension.
- 13.8 Reasons for immediate withdrawal may include:
 - 13.8.1 Breach of the accreditation agreement;
 - 13.8.2 Discrediting or damaging the reputation of ASI and/or its associated organizations;
 - 13.8.3 Unwillingness or inability of a CAB to correct major nonconformities within the time specified in the suspension notification;
 - 13.8.4 Liquidation, or filing for bankruptcy or other actions leading to closure of the CAB as an operating business;
 - 13.8.5 Misrepresentation of information to show conformity of the CAB with ASI or scheme requirements.
- 13.9 Both parties may terminate accreditation following provisions specified in the accreditation agreement.
- 13.10 Following withdrawal or termination of accreditation:
 - 13.10.1 The CAB shall within five days inform all their subcontractors, affiliates, partners, and clients in writing of the withdrawal or termination of accreditation and its related implications;
 - 13.10.2 The CAB shall provide ASI evidence of having contacted all subcontractors, affiliates, partners and clients within five days;
 - 13.10.3 The CAB shall immediately cease making reference to its accredited status;
 - 13.10.4 The CAB shall immediately cease using the ASI trademark in any form;
 - 13.10.5 The CAB shall return the accreditation certificate to ASI;

- 13.10.6 Reports, records, files and documents in the possession of ASI of the CAB shall remain the property of ASI;
- 13.10.7 ASI shall send a notification to all other accredited CABs and reserves the right to make broader market notification of withdrawal of accreditation when considered appropriate in ASI's sole discretion;
- 13.10.8 Certificates of a CAB issued at time of withdrawal or termination may remain valid for a period of ninety days, subject to confirmation by ASI, following termination/withdrawal date to permit certificate holders to enter into an agreement with another accredited CAB. The MD may choose to extend the transition period, during which ASI may act as the direct contact point for the certificate holder.
- 13.11 The CAB shall pay a fee for the services of the Accreditation Committee as set out in the ASI Fee Schedule.
- 13.12 ASI shall inform the respective certification scheme of withdrawal or termination of a CAB's accreditation.
- 13.13 The lifting of suspension shall occur by formal action of the MD after receipt of a recommendation from the Accreditation Committee (except for nonpayment).
 - 13.13.1 ASI shall inform the respective certification scheme of the lifting of suspension;
 - 13.13.2 ASI shall send a notification of the lifting of suspension to all other accredited CABs.
 - 13.13.3 ASI shall make the necessary updates to its website.
 - 13.13.4 The CAB shall pay any fees incurred related to the lifting of suspension.
- 13.14 Following withdrawal or termination, accreditation shall be granted only after the CAB has again successfully completed both the application process and the initial accreditation process, including payment of all required fees.
 - 13.14.1 ASI may choose not to accept re-application of a CAB that had its accreditation withdrawn, or a new entity staffed with personnel associated with a CAB which had its accreditation withdrawn for a period of twenty four months to the date of the withdrawal notification.
- 13.15 A record of suspensions and withdrawals of accreditation shall be maintained on the ASI website (www.asi-assurance.org). The name and location of each CAB whose accreditation has been suspended partially or entirely, or withdrawn shall be posted with the effective date(s) and explanation(s) of why the CAB's accreditation has been suspended or withdrawn.

14 TRANSFER OF ACCREDITATION

- 14.1 If an accredited CAB wishes to transfer its accreditation to another CAB, the following requirements shall apply:
 - 14.1.1 The accredited CAB shall send a formal request to ASI at asi-info@asi-assurance.org explaining the reason for transfer and naming the entity to take over the accreditation, as well as the proposed timelines for the transfer process.

- 14.1.2 If the entity to take over the accreditation is not ASI accredited for the relevant program, it shall apply for accreditation following section 6 of the procedure.
- 14.1.3 If the entity to take over accreditation is an ASI accredited CAB for the relevant program, section 12 shall apply (also in the case where the CAB in question already holds an accreditation certificate that includes the technical and/or geographic accreditation scope of the accredited CAB wishing to transfer its accreditation).
- 14.1.4 Fees as described in the relevant sections of this procedure shall be applicable.

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