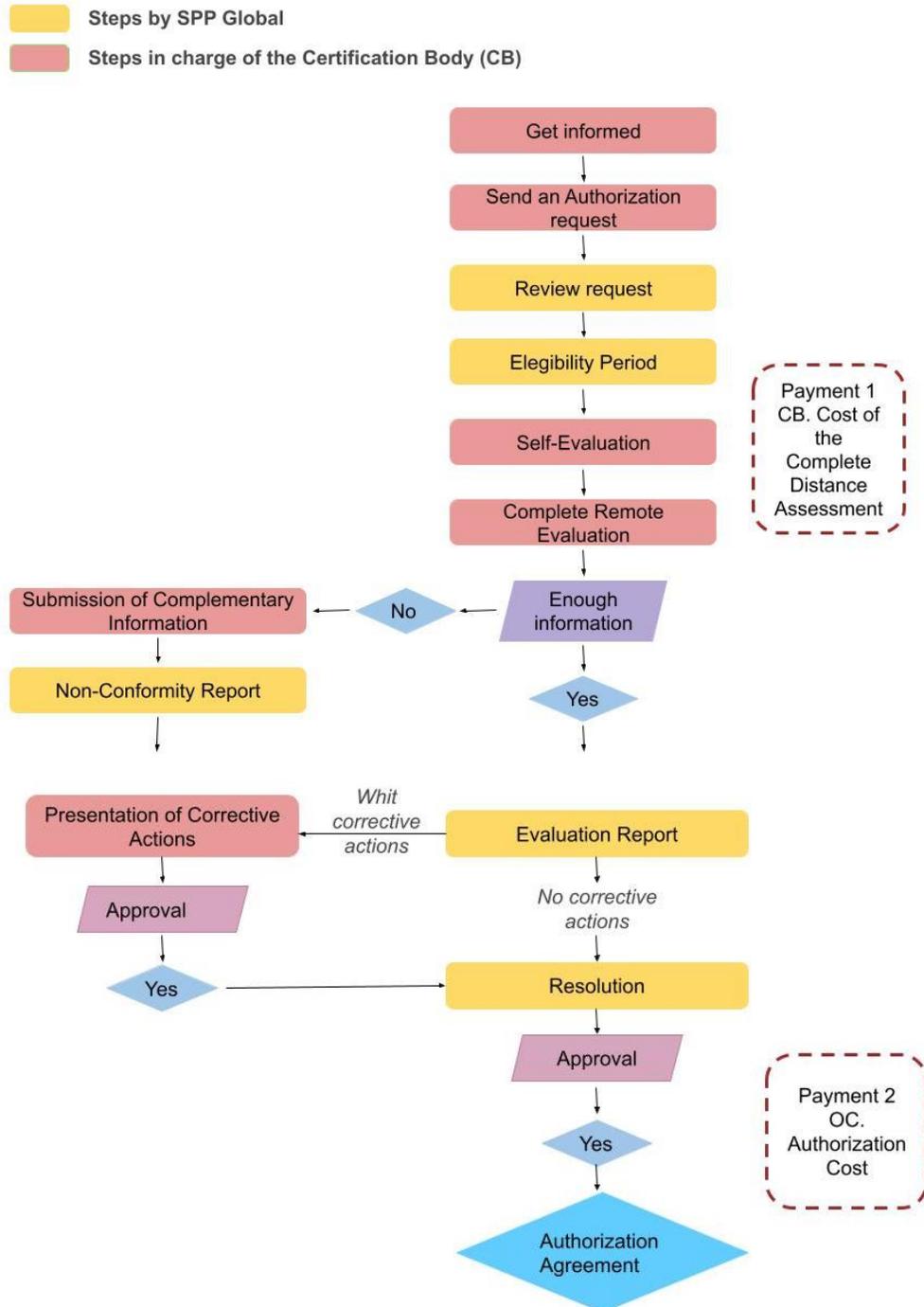


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# 1 PROCESS FLOWCHART



## 2 INTRODUCTION

The official language of this document is Spanish. In case of need for clarification related to a version of this document published in another language, the Spanish version will prevail.

## 3 OBJECTIVE

This document establishes the procedure and requirements applied by SPP GLOBAL to grant authorization to and supervise the Certification Entities that operate the certification system of the Small Producers' Symbol.

## 4 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Certification Entities that request and those that have an authorization to operate the Small Producers' Symbol certification program.

## 5 REFERENCES

To perform this procedure, it is required to consult and apply the following documents in their current version:

- Authorization Application for Certification Entities
- Authorization Agreement for Certification Entities
- Regulations on Costs for Certification Entities

## 6 DEFINITIONS

- a. **Corrective Actions (OC):** An action submitted by the OC in the event of non-compliance with any clause of the Authorization Agreement and the regulations that result from the annexes to this agreement.
- b. **Day:** Calendar Day
- c. **Certifier:** A person having technical competence, enough experience and enough professional prestige to make decisions concerning the judgment of compliance with the criteria of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- d. **Evaluator:** A person having the technical expertise to carry out the document-based as well as the field evaluation of compliance with the different criteria of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- e. **Basic Evaluation:** An evaluation conducted each year as part of the supervision evaluation.
- f. **Certification Entity Evaluation:** Systematic, independent and documented process to obtain and evaluate evidence objectively in order to determine the degree of compliance with the provisions of the Authorization Agreement.
- g. **On-Site Evaluation (of OC):** It is a field evaluation undergone by the Certification Entity to verify compliance with the criteria for Certification Entities.

- h. **Objective evidence:** Records, statements of facts or any other information that is verifiable and reproducible.
- i. **SPP GLOBAL:** Símbolo de Pequeños Productores Global Asociación Civil, A.C.
- j. **Evaluation findings:** Results obtained after evaluating the objective evidence, which shows compliance or non-compliance with specific criteria.
- k. **Non-Conformity:** non-compliance with any clause of the Authorization Agreement and the regulations that result from the annexes to this agreement.
- l. **OC:** Certification Entity.
- m. **SPP:** Small Producers' Symbol
- n. **Regulatory Framework:** The set of procedures, regulations, guidelines, policies, codes and forms that regulate the certification, registration, user and authorization program of the Small Producers' Symbol. The Declaration of Principles and Values of the Small Producers' Symbol is the philosophical foundation of the Regulatory Framework, but it is not part of it.

## 7. PROCEDURE

### 7.1 AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

- a. OCs willing to obtain the authorization to operate the certification program of the Small Producers' Symbol must send an Application, completed and signed by an authorized representative, to SPP GLOBAL, attaching the documentation indicated therein. SPP GLOBAL has an official application form, which specifies the documentation that the OC must submit along with the application.
- b. In the event that an applying OC has branches and wants to include them in the authorization, these must have at least the following functions and responsibilities:
  - i. Evaluator scoring, training and monitoring processes.
  - ii. Review of applications.
  - iii. Scheduling of inspections and assignment of evaluators.
  - iv. Review of evaluation reports
  - v. Certification decision
  - vi. Respond to complaints and appeals
- c. In the event that a regional representation of the OC does not perform these functions, it will be considered as part of the OC's headquarters.
- d. The branches that are included must guarantee proper service and make sure that communication mechanisms are clear, either centrally or in each region.
- e. In order for a Certification Entity to offer its SPP services in a given continent, it must have at least one qualified SPP evaluator residing in that continent, that is a person who can travel to the country in question when required.
- f. Follow-up to particular cases could be ensured separately.

## **7.2 REVIEW OF REQUEST**

- a. Application review is performed by personnel assigned by SPP GLOBAL who ensures that the required documents have been sent in and are complete.
- b. Once the application is submitted, authorized SPP GLOBAL personnel assigns a reference number to the OC. From that moment on, any inquiries related to the authorization request is to be made through this reference number.
- c. In the event that the application is not filled out correctly or a document is missing, the personnel assigned by SPP GLOBAL must inform the OC so that it makes corrections or provides the required documents.
- d. The OC has up to 60 calendar days to submit any corrections and complementary documentation. Failure to do so will cause the authorization process to be automatically invalidated and the applicant, if interested, must start the process again.
- e. In the event that the application is duly completed, SPP GLOBAL staff must inform the OC that their application was declared admissible and will also provide them with the reference number of the application. The OC is informed that SPP GLOBAL will initiate the Objection Procedure described in the next chapter.

## **7.3 OBJECTION PROCEDURE**

- a. Once the application is declared admissible, SPP GLOBAL publishes the intention of the applicant to obtain the Authorization on its website and notifies organizations and companies certified under the Small Producers' Symbol. SPP GLOBAL's publication and notification starts a period of 15 days to submit documented objections against the Authorization for the Certification Entity in question, which must be supported with concrete and verifiable information regarding non-compliances with respect to the Code of Conduct of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- b. In the event of documented objections being submitted, these must be processed by SPP GLOBAL in accordance with the Procedure for Non-Conformities of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- c. If no objections are received within the established deadline, or once an objection is denied, the certification process continues.

## **7.4 EVALUATION FORM**

SPP GLOBAL sends the applying OC the Evaluation Form. The Evaluation Form must be completed by the applicant to carry out their self-assessment. The form includes a list of criteria based on the following elements:

- a. Authorization Procedure for Certification Entities of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- b. Criteria of the ISO IEC 065 Guide
- c. Requirements of the Authorization Agreement of the Small Producers' Symbol.

## **7.5 APPOINTMENT OF AN EVALUATOR**

- a. SPP GLOBAL notifies the applying OC of the name of the qualified evaluator assigned to conduct the evaluation.
- b. To be able to evaluate an OC, the evaluator must hold a qualification as a Type-C Evaluator.

- c. The OC may object to SPP GLOBAL's choice regarding the evaluator assigned. Said objection must be submitted in writing, together with a duly substantiated statement of reasons.
- d. If the evaluator is not accepted by the applying OC, the proposal will be modified as many times as required. However, it must be kept in mind that this will delay the authorization process.

## 7.6 DOCUMENT-BASED EVALUATION

- a. It consists of carrying out an evaluation of compliance with all the criteria for Certification Entities indicated in the Evaluation Form.
- b. The evaluation is carried out remotely in all cases; it is not necessary to carry out an On-site evaluation. All information is sent by email or other virtual means.  
  
NOTE: If the applying Certification Entity prefers, an On-Site Evaluation can be carried out, which can be combined with the face-to-face SPP System Training.
- c. The Document-based Evaluation has a fixed cost, in relation to the number of branches. This cost is specified in the document "Regulations on Costs for Certification Entities" of the Small Producers' Symbol.
- d. In order for the execution of the evaluation to be considered accepted, the corresponding payment must be made.
- e. The assigned Evaluator initiates the evaluation based on the information sent by the applying OC, which includes the Evaluation Form and the documentation required in the application form.
- f. The evaluation consists of verifying compliance with the criteria on the basis of the information that the OC provides in the form and the documents that the OC attaches to its application.  
The evaluator must use the Evaluation Form and take notes in it. Completion deadline for the evaluation by the evaluator is 30 days.
- g. If there are doubts regarding the information contained in the documents or the Evaluation Form, the evaluator may request the OC to clarify or add information, via the most appropriate means. The OC has a maximum of 21 days to do this.
- h. The applying OC receives a document-based evaluation report within 30 business days after the day the evaluator concludes the document-based evaluation.
- i. In the event that there have been Non-Conformities, the OC must submit Corrective Actions within a period of no more than 60 days (2 months) after receiving the document-based evaluation report.
- j. The proposed corrective actions will be reviewed by the evaluator within a maximum period of 15 days after receiving them.
- k. In the event that no corrective actions for the non-conformities are sent in within the established deadline, the authorization process is considered invalid and the applying OC, if interested, must start the process again.

## **7.7 RESOLUTION**

- a. Once the evaluator submits the evaluation report and its corresponding annexes to SPP GLOBAL, SPP GLOBAL evaluates and makes a decision based on the results to then issue a resolution by means of a positive or negative notification.
- b. If the resolution is positive, SPP GLOBAL notifies the applying OC that the evaluation was positive and therefore the authorization is granted. With this, the next phase to sign or ratify the Authorization Agreement is carried out.
- c. If SPP GLOBAL identifies Non-Conformities, these must be resolved before the Final resolution and the OC must submit corrective actions within a period of no more than 60 calendar days (2 months) from the date on which it is informed of the Non-Conformities.
- d. The proposed corrective actions will be reviewed by the evaluator within a maximum period of 20 days after receiving them.
- e. In the event that no corrective actions for the Non-Conformities are sent in within the established deadline, a negative notification is issued. SPP GLOBAL must send a notification letter to the applying OC informing them of the causes for which this decision was made.

## **7.8 SIGNING THE AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT**

In order for an OC to start operating the Small Producers' Symbol Certification Program, it must meet the following requirements:

- Having received the positive notification from SPP GLOBAL, which is valid for a period of 5 years.
- Having paid SPP GLOBAL the Annual Participation Fee. The rate of the Annual Participation Fee is specified in the Regulations on Costs for Certification Entities of the Small Producers' Symbol.

## **7.9 BASIC EVALUATION:**

At the end of the fifth year of an OC's Authorization, an On-Site Evaluation (Chapter 7.11) must be carried out to renew the Authorization granted by SPP Global.

For annual supervision, the evaluation of the authorized OC must be carried out as of the second year after obtaining the Authorization. Said evaluation aims at the following:

- Verify that the conditions under which the authorization was granted are maintained.
  - Verify that the certification program is applied as established in the regulatory framework.
- a. The first step in the annual supervision evaluation is to perform a “basic evaluation” to determine, through a risk analysis, whether it is necessary for the OC to undergo a complete evaluation by SPP GLOBAL.
  - b. The OC must send the following information to SPP GLOBAL:

- i. Previous Evaluation Report.
  - ii. Annual Activity Report.
  - iii. Eventual Non-Conformity Notes issued to the OC by SPP GLOBAL.
  - iv. Most up-to-date fee chart for the SPP certification program
  - v. The files of some operators certified or registered by the OC, based on a sampling made by SPP GLOBAL considering 10%-20% of the total number of actors and a minimum of one.
  - vi. For the sampling, the following elements must be considered: 1) number of actors; 2) variety of actors; 3) geographic distribution; 4) eventual Non-Conformity notes sent to the OC by SPP GLOBAL.
- c. The evaluator reviews the Annual Activity Report previously sent by the Ochre evaluator uses the file checklist to verify proper application of the certification program. The evaluator prepares the Evaluation Report in which the level of risk is established.
- d. The OC receives the Evaluation Report, reviews it and signs it as accepted. If the OC has doubts or does not agree, the report may be adjusted if necessary. At the end, the OC must send the report showing a signature for acceptance.
- e. If the risk is low, this basic evaluation concludes the supervision evaluation. If the risk is medium level, a Document-based Evaluation must be carried out. If the risk is high, an On-Site Evaluation must be carried out. The OC receives the Evaluation Report, reviews it, and signs it as accepted:

Level of Risk	Factor	To apply
Low	<25	Basic Evaluation
Medium level	25-30	Document-based Evaluation
High	>30	On-site Evaluation

- f. If the result of risk determination shows a factor greater than 25 points, a Document-based Evaluation must be carried out. The Document-based Evaluation procedure is carried out according to what is indicated in chapter 7.6
- g. If the result of risk determination establishes a high level - greater than 30 points, an On-Site Assessment is carried out according to the following procedure:
- i. The OC must complete the Evaluation Form as a self-evaluation of compliance with all the criteria for Certification Entities indicated in the form.
  - ii. The cost of the On-Site Evaluation depends on the work plan upon performing the assessment of the Evaluation Form. This cost is specified in the document "Regulations on Costs for Certification Entities" of the Small Producers' Symbol.
  - iii. In order for the execution of the evaluation to be considered accepted, the corresponding payment must be made.
  - iv. The assigned Evaluator initiates the evaluation based on the information sent by the applying OC, which includes the Evaluation Form and the supporting documentation indicated in the application form.
  - v. The evaluation consists of verifying compliance with the criteria on the basis

of the information that the OC provides in the form and the supporting documents that the OC attaches to its application. The evaluator must use the Evaluation Form and take notes in it. Completion deadline for the evaluation by the evaluator is 21 days.

- vi. If there are doubts regarding the information contained in the documents or the Evaluation Form, the evaluator may request the OC to clarify or add information, via the most appropriate means. The OC has a maximum of 21 days to do this.
- vii. The applying OC receives a document-based evaluation report within 15 business days after the day the evaluator concludes the document-based evaluation.
- viii. After sending the Evaluation Report, SPP GLOBAL prepares the work plan for the On-Site Evaluation and sends it to the OC for review. SPP has a maximum of 21 days upon submission of the Evaluation Report to do this.
- ix. The requesting OC must confirm acceptance in writing or propose another Field Evaluation date within a period of no more than 5 business days after notification.
- x. In the event of any comment or modification to the Evaluation Plan, SPP Global must inform the evaluator in a timely manner.
- xi. The evaluator must ensure that the following activities are carried out:
  - a) Introduce themselves to the applying OC and define the contact person who will accompany them.
  - b) Hand in the Evaluation Plan, to review its objective, its scope, clarify any doubts and, if necessary, make any modifications.
  - c) Give a summary of the methodology, procedure and requirements that will be used during the evaluation.
  - d) Confirm the hours and dates for the opening, closing and intermediate meetings between the evaluator and the department staff to be evaluated.
- xii. The evaluator must collect and verify the information:
  - a) As for the collection of objective evidence, this must be performed through interviews, document review, observation of activities and conditions in the departments involved.
  - b) The information collected via interviews must be confirmed through the use of other independent sources, such as: physical observation, measurements, records, etc.
- xiii. The evaluator must arrange a closing meeting: The closing meeting aims to present the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, in such a way that they are understood and acknowledged by the applying OC:
  - a) The Evaluation Report must be presented and submitted in way that

clearly highlights the documented Non-Conformities.

- a) During this meeting, the applicant should be given the opportunity to provide clarifications, trying to avoid debate.
  - b) To end the meeting, the conclusions obtained must be presented, and participants must be requested to sign the report in agreement.
- xiv. Procedure continues on chapter 7.7 - Resolution

## **7.10 EVALUATION TO RENEW THE AUTHORIZATION**

It is carried out once the fifth year of authorization has concluded and according to the following procedure:

- a. SPP Global must inform the OC two months before the end of the 5th year of said OC's Authorization.
- b. The evaluation for renewal can begin 2 months before or 2 months after the conclusion of the 5th year of Authorization.
- c. SPP Global must submit the Evaluation Plan which must include a Document-based Evaluation and an On-Site Evaluation.
- d. SPP Global must submit a cost proposal that must include:
  - i. Document-based Evaluation
  - ii. On-site Evaluation
  - iii. Annual Participation

### **NOTES:**

- i. The costs for these rubrics are specified in the Regulations on Costs for Certification Entities.
  - ii. The cost of the On-Site Evaluation depends on the On-Site Evaluation Plan once the Document-based Evaluation is performed.
  - iii. If a Non-Conformity Report was issued during the Document-based Evaluation, the OC can demonstrate Corrective Actions or a Corrective Action Plan when the On-Site Evaluation is carried out.
- e. As part of the On-Site evaluation, the assigned evaluator must monitor one or more on-site evaluation processes performed on the clients of the Certification Entity. In principle this monitoring must be carried out as part of an ordinary evaluation or through a specific control evaluation.
  - f. To determine the sample of the processes to monitor, the following criteria must be considered:
    - i. Total number of actors certified and/or registered by the OC
    - ii. Geographical distribution of the actors
    - iii. From the total number of actors, calculate a 5% sample size (at least one actor)
    - iv. In all cases, the accessibility to the communities of the actors to visit must be taken into account.

- g. The cost of this monitoring must be covered by the OC as part of the travel allowance for the on-site evaluation.
- h. Monitoring activities must be included in the OC's On-Site Evaluation Plan.

## 8. NON-CONFORMITY NOTES

At any time, SPP GLOBAL can send Non-Conformity Notes if the Certification Entity does not apply the Regulatory Framework to its clients or because it does not comply with the part of the Regulatory Framework that applies to Certification Entities.

There are two types of Non-Conformity:

- a. Minor Non-Conformity
- b. Major Non-Conformity

The two types of Non-Conformities will be treated as indicated in the following table:

Non-Conformity Type	Description	Corrective Actions	Responsible Person	RESOLUTION No.
1. Minor (ME)	Non-conformity that, if resolved in a reasonable time, does not put the quality of SPP's system and/or SPP's credibility at risk	They must be resolved prior to a subsequent SPP GLOBAL supervision evaluation.	RCC <sup>1</sup>	If it is not resolved in a timely manner, a Minor Non-conformity becomes then a Major Non-conformity
2. Major (MA)	Non-conformity that, if not resolved immediately, puts the quality of SPP's system and/or SPP's credibility at risk. It must therefore be resolved immediately.	They must be resolved within a short deadline established by SPP GLOBAL	DE <sup>2</sup>	In the event that the Major Nonconformity is not resolved in a timely manner, the authorization for the application of the SPP program is suspended.

<sup>1</sup>Head of Certification and Quality

<sup>2</sup>Executive Director

## 9. NON-CONFORMITY PROCEDURE

1. In the event that a major non-conformity has been identified, SPP GLOBAL sends a non-conformity Note to the OC for the latter to review it and sign it as accepted.
2. If the OC has observations or does not agree, they must inform SPP GLOBAL indicating the reasons why the note should be adjusted if necessary.
3. IF the note was adjusted, SPP GLOBAL resends it so that it be signed by the OC. The deadline for the OC to review and send the signed note is 5 calendar days.
4. In the event of a minor non-conformity, the OC must take the necessary measures to correct it before the next evaluation by SPP GLOBAL. When SPP GLOBAL performs the next evaluation, the OC must demonstrate the measures taken to correct the Non-conformity so that it will not be repeated.
5. In the event of a major Non-Conformity, the OC must resolve the causes within the deadline indicated by SPP GLOBAL. If not resolved, the OC will be Suspended as indicated in chapter 4.
6. SPP GLOBAL will send a Suspension notice to the OC indicating the reason, a reference to the regulatory framework criterion that is not being respected, the corrective action to be taken and the deadline established by SPP GLOBAL to carry out said action.

### 9.1 SUSPENSION

#### 1 CAUSE:

- i. Failure to resolve a Major Non-Conformity of which the OC was informed: In this case, a Non-Conformity note is issued first and if it is not resolved, a Suspension notice is issued.
- ii. Identification of an Unacceptable Non-Conformity: In this case, no non-conformity note is issued, but a Suspension notice is issued directly.

#### 2 CONSEQUENCES:

- i. OC cannot receive new requests for SPP certification and registration.
- ii. OC must complete the certification and registration processes that it had already initiated prior to receiving the Suspension notice.
- iii. OC continues to appear on the official list of SPP GLOBAL Certification Entities showing the "In Review" status. (The public lists of SPP GLOBAL must indicate by means of a note the meaning of "Suspended": "The "suspended" status is granted for example after not making a timely payment. However, this can be corrected to regularize status")
- iv. Current authorization cycle deadlines are not suspended.
- v. Additionally, any pending debts concerning authorization for certification entities must be paid.

#### 3 LIFTING:

- i. The Suspension is lifted when the reasons for which said status was determined are declared resolved.
- ii. Additionally, any pending debts concerning authorization for certification entities must be paid, such as annual participation fee or an eventual evaluation.

#### 4 SUSPENSION PROCEDURE:

- i. If the OC does not resolve the reasons for which the Non-Conformity note was issued within the deadline established by SPP GLOBAL, the OC will be subject to a Suspension.
- ii. SPP GLOBAL will send a Suspension notice to the OC indicating the reason, a reference to the regulatory framework criterion that is not being respected, the corrective action to be taken and the deadline established by SPP GLOBAL to carry out said action.
- iii. The OC receives and signs the suspension notice as accepted.
- iv. If the OC has observations or does not agree, it must inform SPP GLOBAL, indicating the reasons why the suspension should be ended if necessary.
- v. IF the note was adjusted, SPP GLOBAL resends it so that it be signed by the OC. The deadline for the OC to review and send the signed suspension notice is 5 calendar days.
- vi. The deadline established to correct the suspension is 60 calendar days. Processing Times could vary according to the seriousness of the matter. In all cases, the time to resolve the causes for the suspension will always be indicated in the Suspension form.

## 9.2 CANCELATION

### 1. CAUSE:

Failure to resolve the causes for which a Certification Entity was suspended.

### 2. CONSEQUENCES:

- i. OC cannot receive new requests for SPP certification and registration.
- ii. OC must complete the certification and registration processes that it had already initiated prior to receiving the Suspension notice.
- iii. It is removed from the official lists of SPP GLOBAL Certification Entities.
- iv. Any pending debts concerning authorization for Certification Entities must be paid.

### 3. LIFTING:

- i. OC must restart the process as a first-time application.
- ii. OC must demonstrate that it has resolved the causes for which the

authorization was canceled.

- iii. OC must wait at least two years after the cancellation notification date before reapplying for authorization.
- iv. OC must have paid any pending debts corresponding to the previous authorization.

**4. CANCELLATION PROCEDURE:**

- ii. SPP GLOBAL issues a Cancellation Resolution which in all cases is ruled by SPP GLOBAL's Dissents Committee.
- iii. Cancellation occurs in the event that the causes for suspension are not resolved within the established deadlines.
- iv. SPP GLOBAL will notify the OC that its authorization has been canceled by means of an official communication, stating the reasons why such decision was reached. The notification must include a request for acknowledgment of receipt.
- v. SPP GLOBAL will remove the OC from the official lists of SPP stakeholders.
- vi. There is the possibility that SPP GLOBAL's Dissents Committee determines a condition to lift the cancellation.