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National Cyber Security Agency

National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) – Processes for NIA Certification

[NCSA-NISCF-CERT-NIA-POSS]

Process Document

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National Cyber Security Agency

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Abstract	This document is the process document for NIA Certification developed by the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) with the intended usage in the operation of the National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) National Information Assurance (NIA) Certification Service. This document provides the description of the steps to be followed in NISCF Certification Operation for the NIA Certification Service. This process document shall be read along other relevant NISCF's Certification Definitions, Policy, Standards, Agreement and Terms and Conditions.

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National Cyber Security Agency

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National Cyber Security Agency

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1. Introduction

National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) created its Certification Services to provide assurance that organizations comply and conform with specific Cyber Security requirements defined in National and International Standards that are adopted by NCSA.

In effort to improve the NIA Certification Service, NCSA developed this document, titled "National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) – Processes for NIA Certification" - V 1.0 - C0 – Public / PS1 – Non-Personal Data (Non-PD), to provide the cyber space with clearer processes that describe the steps to be followed in NIA Certification Operation.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide Applicants to NIA Certification Service, Certified Organization and NIA Accredited Auditor with the processes steps to be followed in NISCF Certification Operation for NIA Certification Service.

This document provides the necessary steps and key rules for Applicants to NIA Certification Service, Certified Organization and NIA Accredited Auditor required to apply for the NIA Certification Service and walkthrough the NIA Certification Service lifecycle for Certified Organizations and NIA Accredited Auditor.

This document does not include specific processes for all NISCF Certification Services lifecycle phases. The left-out phases have clear, self-explanatory requirements defined in the different Standards for each type of NISCF Certification Service.

2.2. Scope

This document applies only to NIA Certification Service offered by NCSA under the NISCF.

3. Key Definitions

The terminologies used in this document are consistent with the definitions provided in the NCSA-NISCF-CERT-GTXD (General Taxonomy Document for National Certification - Public).

4. Processes

4.1. General Overview

The below **Figure 1: Overview of NIA Certification Service Lifecycle** provides an overview of the NIA Certification Service Lifecycle. It represents a graphical simplification of the different phases of the NIA Certification Service Lifecycle, their timing, and their relationships.

The processes detailed in this document are related to either one of the described phases, a combination of phases or used within one or multiples phases.

Below is the key for the figure:

Phases in the Application, Scope Acceptance, Auditor Engagement and Initial Certification Audit and Review before obtaining the NIA Certification.

Phases by which the NIA Certification shall pass during the Certification lifecycle to maintain an active NIA Certificate of Compliance or extend the period of validity of such Certificate.

Phases that may occur during the Certification lifecycle based on NCSA decisions or voluntary requests from the Certified Organization.

Phases that put an end to the period of validity of a NIA Certificate of Compliance and the Certification lifecycle, based on NCSA decisions, voluntary requests from, or simply inaction from the Certified Organization.

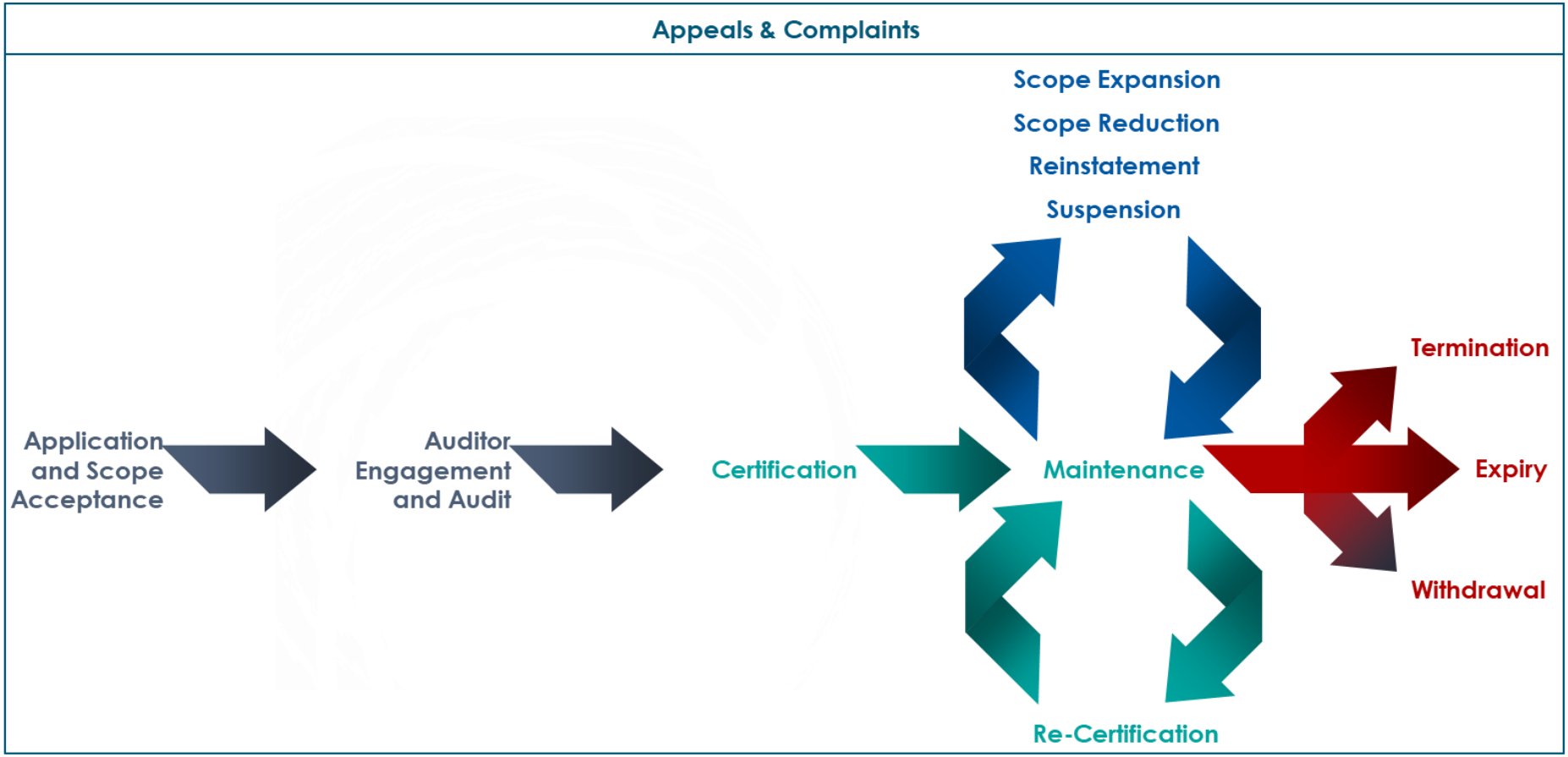


Figure 1: Overview of NIA Certification Service Lifecycle

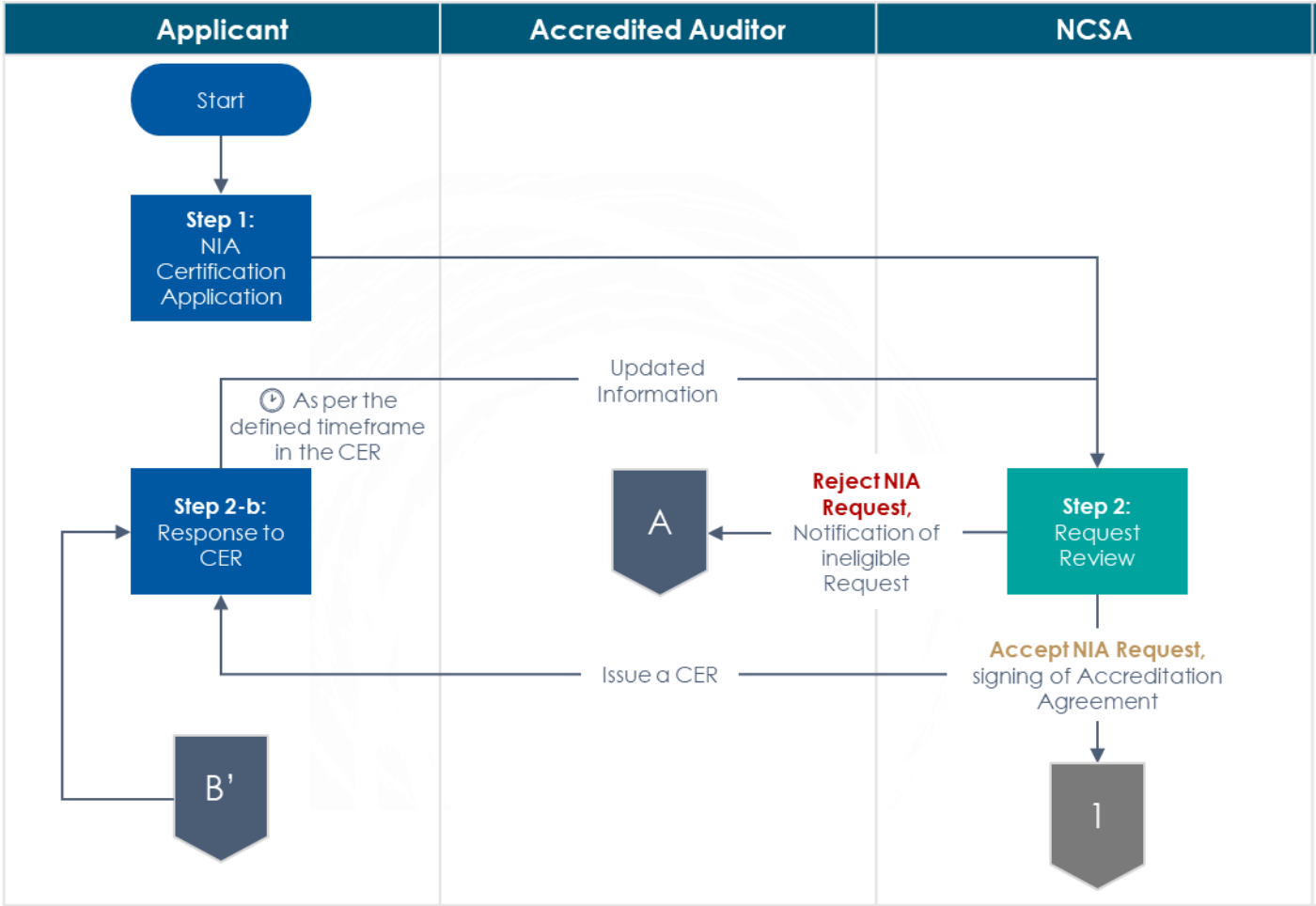
4.2. NIA Certification Operation

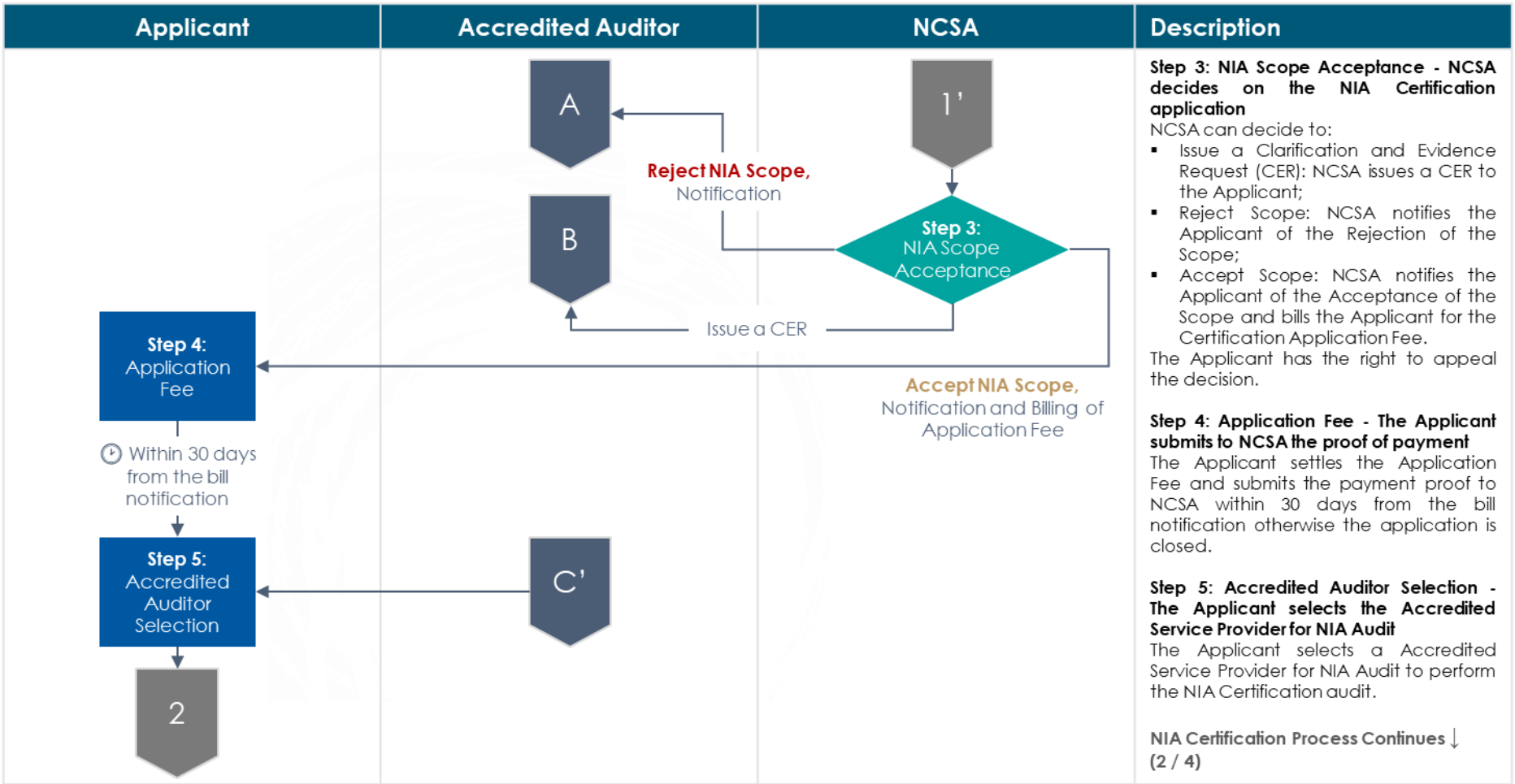
4.2.1. NIA Certification Process

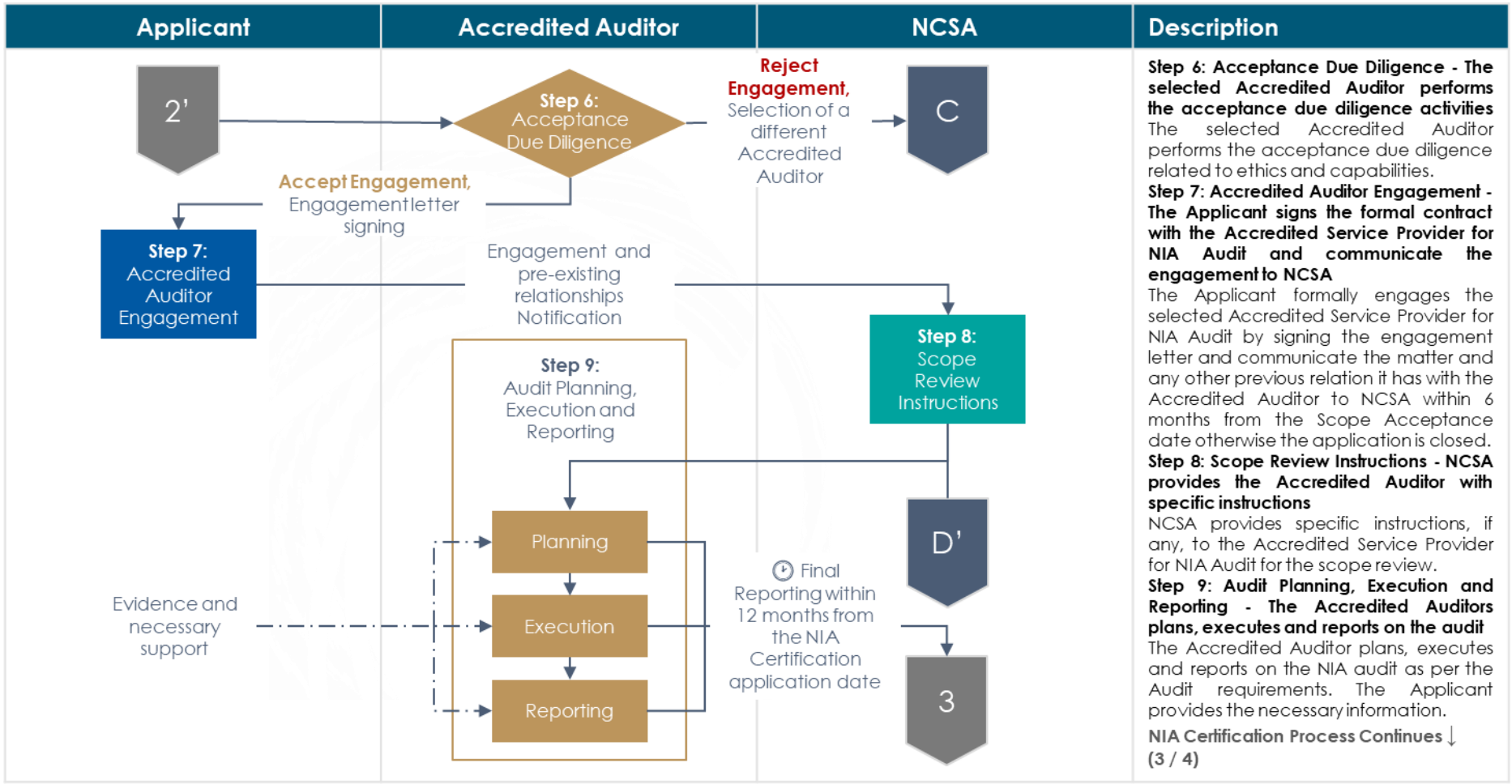
The NIA Certification process defines the steps that needs to be followed by the applicant to NIA Certification Service, tasks of the NIA Accredited Auditor and the actions that NCSA will take during the process to obtain NIA Certification.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NIA Certification Service Agreement, the NIA Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.1 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 2: NIA Certification Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Certification process.


Applicant
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: NIA Certification Application
Updated Information
As per the defined timeframe in the CER
Step 2-b: Response to CER
A
Reject NIA Request, Notification of ineligible Request
Step 2: Request Review
Issue a CER
Accept NIA Request, signing of Accreditation Agreement
B'
1
Step 1: NIA Certification Application - The Applicant submits a request for NIA Certification Service
The Applicant submits the formal application request through the dedicated form on National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) website. A request ID is generated. The Applicant shares all mandatory documents (Application Pack). The application has validity of 12 months.
Step 2: Request Review - NCSA reviews the submitted documents
NCSA checks the Applicant eligibility and reviews the Application Pack for completeness. If the Applicant is not eligible, the request is rejected. When accepted, NCSA provides a signed copy of the NIA Certification Service Agreement and reviews the documents submitted. If the information is unclear or incomplete, NCSA issues a Clarification and Evidence Request (CER).
Step 2-b: Response to CER - The Applicant submits requested information
The Applicant responds to the CER by providing the requested information. The review cycle continues until 2 months from the NIA Certification application date, after which NCSA will conclude based on the available information.
NIA Certification Process Continues ↓
(1 / 4)


Applicant
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
A
1'
Reject NIA Scope,
Notification
B
Step 3:
NIA Scope
Acceptance
Issue a CER
Step 4:
Application
Fee
Accept NIA Scope,
Notification and Billing of
Application Fee
Within 30 days
from the bill
notification
Step 5:
Accredited
Auditor
Selection
C'
2
Step 3: NIA Scope Acceptance - NCSA decides on the NIA Certification application
NCSA can decide to:
Issue a Clarification and Evidence Request (CER): NCSA issues a CER to the Applicant;
Reject Scope: NCSA notifies the Applicant of the Rejection of the Scope;
Accept Scope: NCSA notifies the Applicant of the Acceptance of the Scope and bills the Applicant for the Certification Application Fee.
The Applicant has the right to appeal the decision.
Step 4: Application Fee - The Applicant submits to NCSA the proof of payment
The Applicant settles the Application Fee and submits the payment proof to NCSA within 30 days from the bill notification otherwise the application is closed.
Step 5: Accredited Auditor Selection - The Applicant selects the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit
The Applicant selects a Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform the NIA Certification audit.
NIA Certification Process Continues ↓
(2 / 4)


Applicant
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
2'
Step 6: Acceptance Due Diligence
Reject Engagement, Selection of a different Accredited Auditor
C
Accept Engagement, Engagement letter signing
Step 7: Accredited Auditor Engagement
Engagement and pre-existing relationships Notification
Step 8: Scope Review Instructions
Step 9: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting
Planning
Execution
Reporting
Evidence and necessary support
Final Reporting within 12 months from the NIA Certification application date
D'
3
Step 6: Acceptance Due Diligence - The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence activities
The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence related to ethics and capabilities.
Step 7: Accredited Auditor Engagement - The Applicant signs the formal contract with the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit and communicate the engagement to NCSA
The Applicant formally engages the selected Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit by signing the engagement letter and communicate the matter and any other previous relation it has with the Accredited Auditor to NCSA within 6 months from the Scope Acceptance date otherwise the application is closed.
Step 8: Scope Review Instructions - NCSA provides the Accredited Auditor with specific instructions
NCSA provides specific instructions, if any, to the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit for the scope review.
Step 9: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting - The Accredited Auditors plans, executes and reports on the audit
The Accredited Auditor plans, executes and reports on the NIA audit as per the Audit requirements. The Applicant provides the necessary information.
NIA Certification Process Continues ↓ (3 / 4)

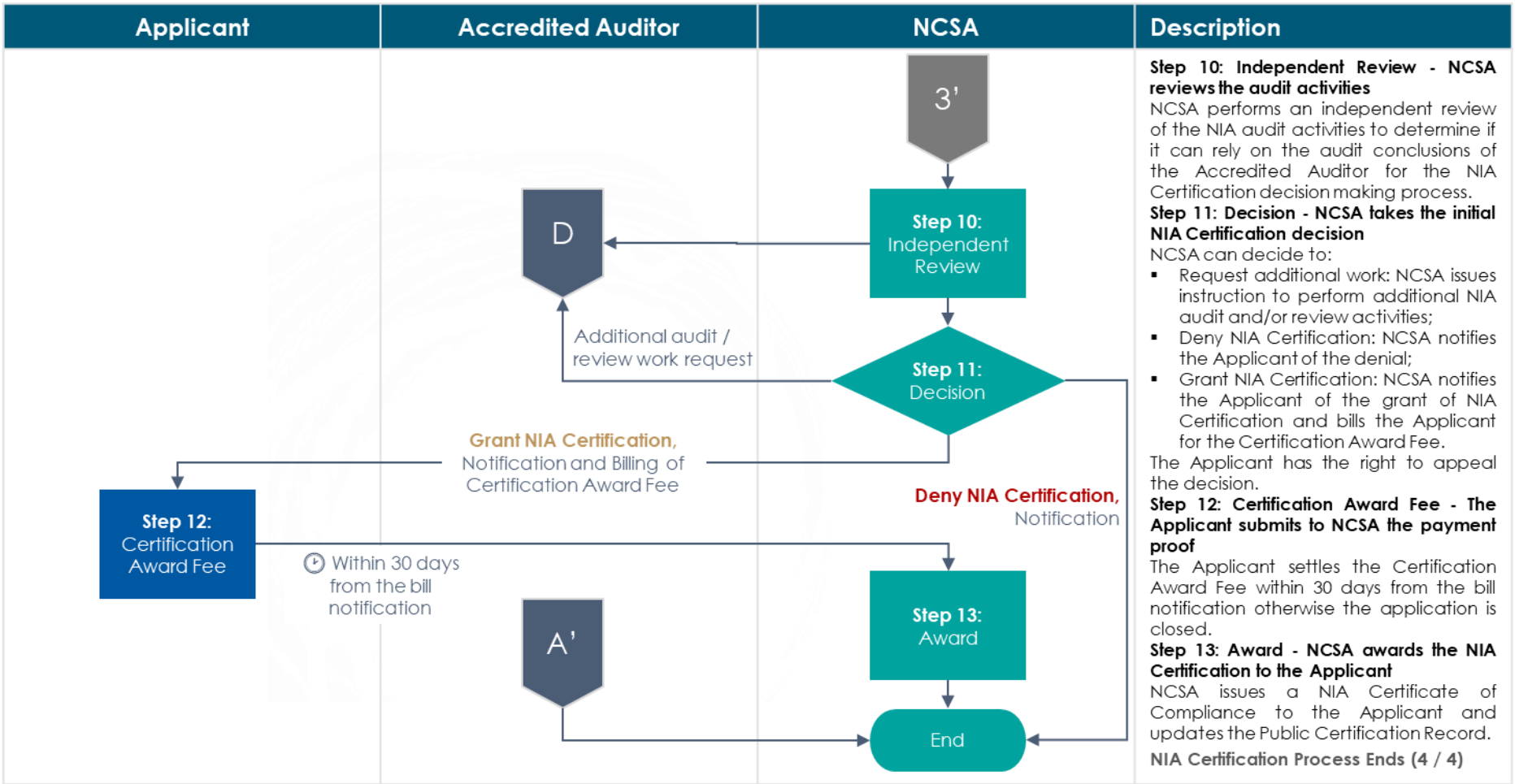


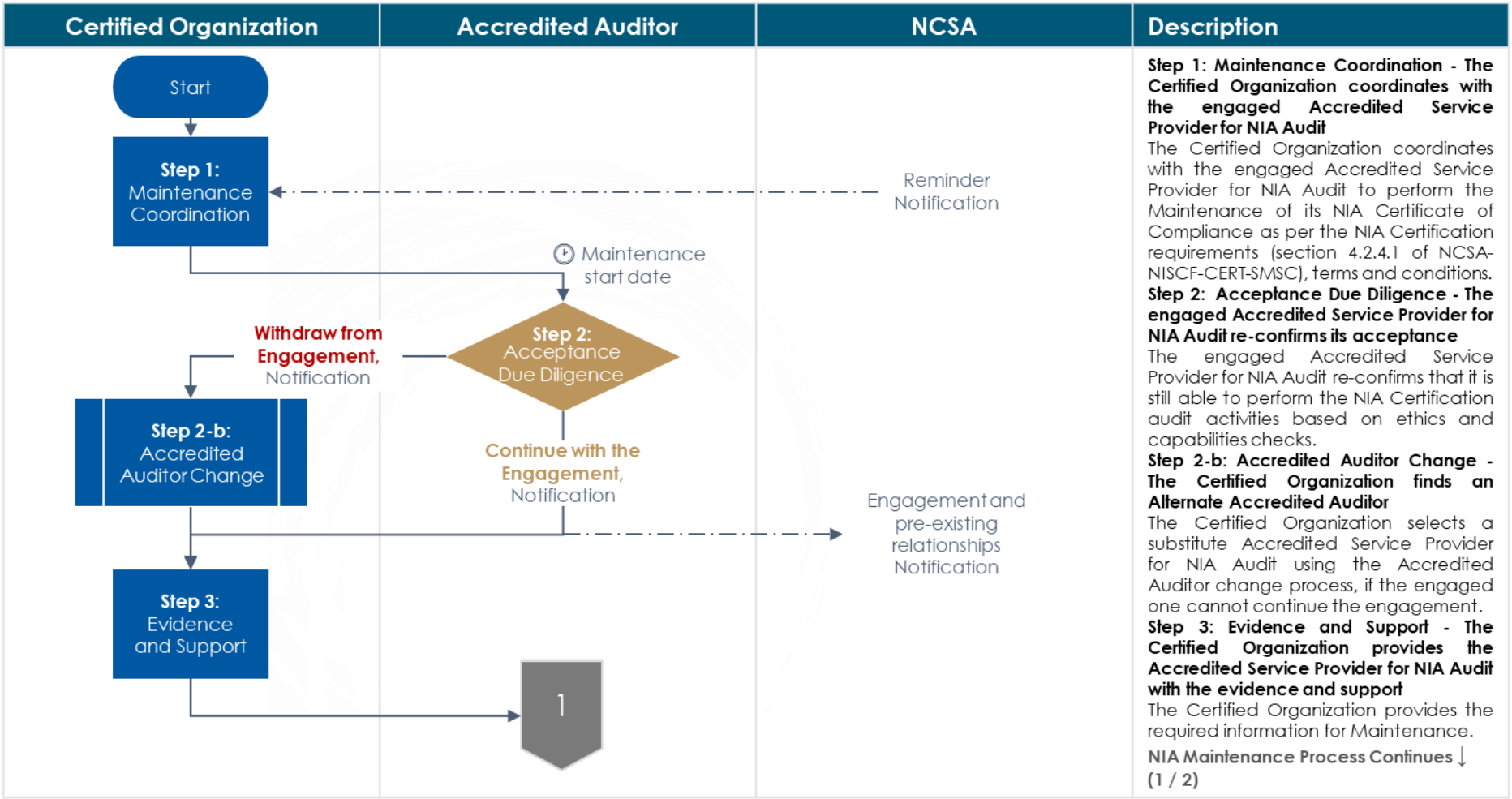
Figure 2: NIA Certification Process

4.2.2. NIA Certification Maintenance

The Maintenance process defines the steps that need to be followed by the Certified Organization, Accredited Auditor, and the actions that NCSA will take during the Maintenance of a NIA Certification.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4.1 NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 3: Maintenance Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Maintenance process.


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: Maintenance Coordination
Reminder Notification
Maintenance start date
Withdraw from Engagement, Notification
Step 2: Acceptance Due Diligence
Step 2-b: Accredited Auditor Change
Continue with the Engagement, Notification
Engagement and pre-existing relationships Notification
Step 3: Evidence and Support
1
Step 1: Maintenance Coordination - The Certified Organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit
The Certified Organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform the Maintenance of its NIA Certificate of Compliance as per the NIA Certification requirements (section 4.2.4.1 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC), terms and conditions.
Step 2: Acceptance Due Diligence - The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms its acceptance
The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms that it is still able to perform the NIA Certification audit activities based on ethics and capabilities checks.
Step 2-b: Accredited Auditor Change - The Certified Organization finds an Alternate Accredited Auditor
The Certified Organization selects a substitute Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit using the Accredited Auditor change process, if the engaged one cannot continue the engagement.
Step 3: Evidence and Support - The Certified Organization provides the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit with the evidence and support
The Certified Organization provides the required information for Maintenance.
NIA Maintenance Process Continues ↓ (1 / 2)

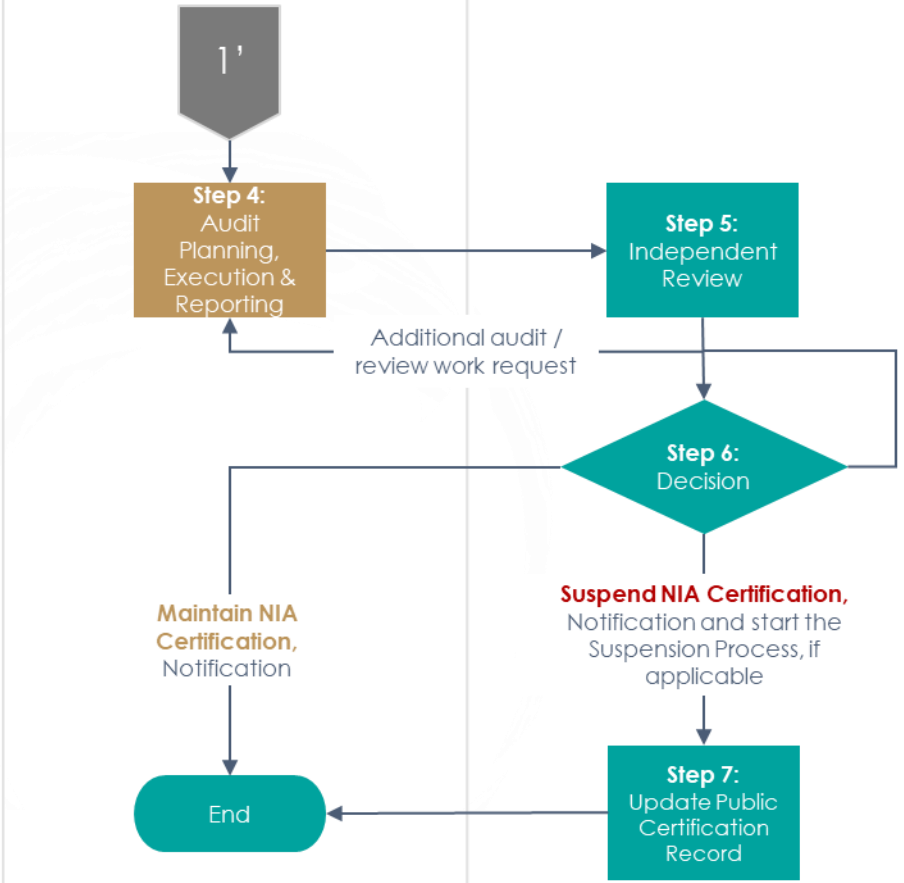
Certified Organization	Accredited Auditor	NCSA	Description
			**Step 4: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting - The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit performs the Maintenance** The Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit plans, executes and reports on the NIA audit as per the Audit requirements. **Step 5: Independent Review - NCSA reviews the audit activities** NCSA performs an independent review of the NIA audit activities to determine if it can rely on the audit conclusions for the Maintenance. **Step 6: Decision - NCSA takes the NIA Certification Maintenance decision** NCSA can decide to: ▪ Request additional work: NCSA issues instruction to perform additional NIA audit and/or review activities; ▪ Suspend NIA Certification: NCSA notifies the Certified organization of the Suspension and initiates the Suspension process; ▪ Maintain NIA Certification: NCSA notifies the Certified organization that the NIA Certificate of Compliance is maintained. The Certified Organization has the right to appeal the decision. **Step 7: Update Public NIA Certification Record - NCSA updates the NIA Certification Status** NCSA updates the NIA Certification Status on the Public Certification Record. **NIA Maintenance Process Ends (2 / 2)**

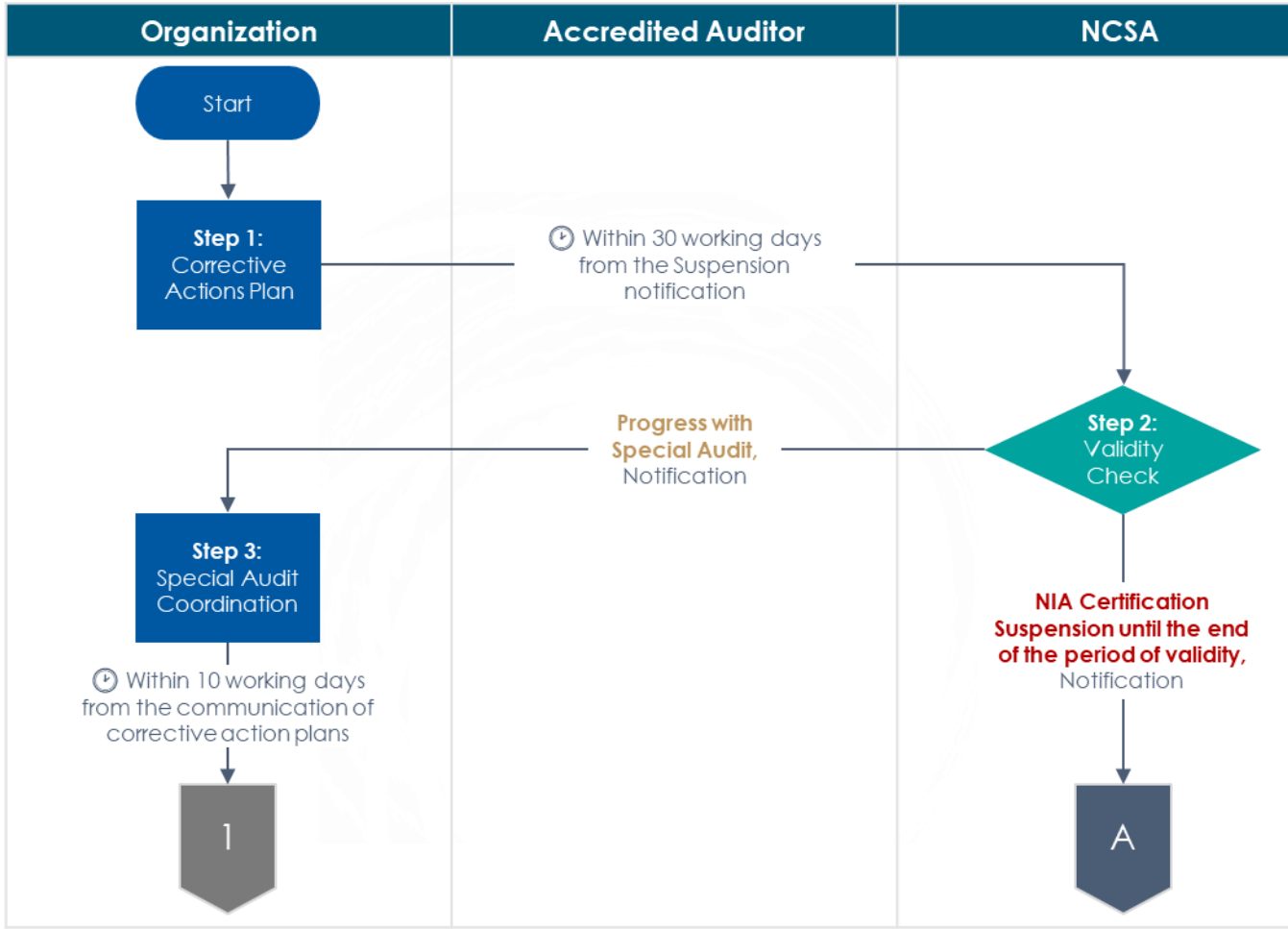
Figure 3: Maintenance Process

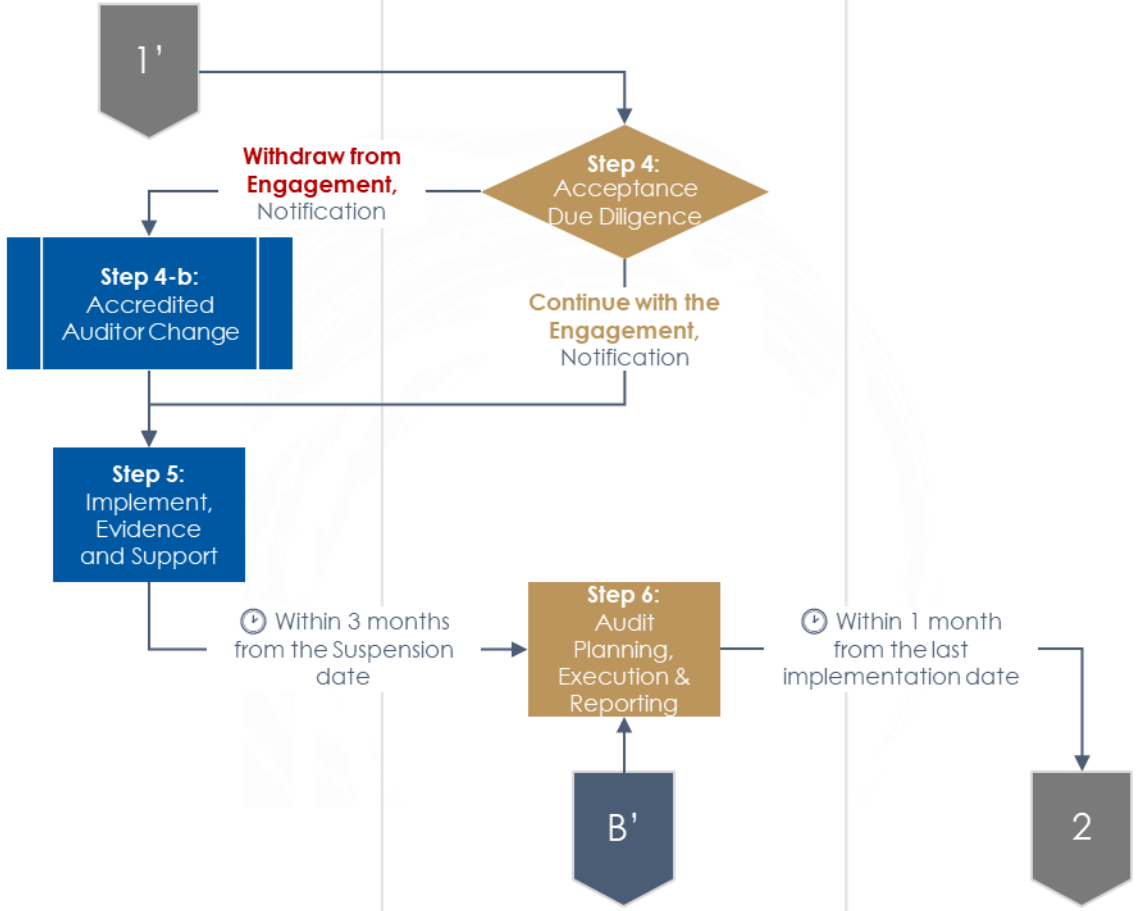
4.2.3. Suspension

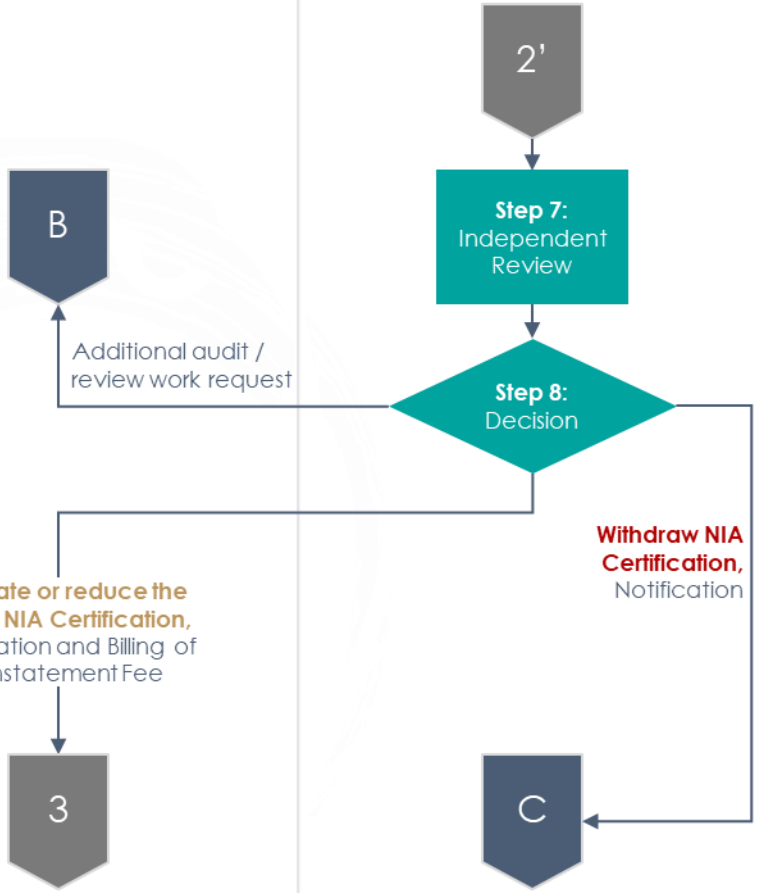
The Suspension process defines the steps that need to be followed by an organization who's its NIA Certificate of Compliance has been suspended in order to reinstate its active status. The process also includes the actions that NCSA will take during the Suspension of a NIA Certification.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4.2 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 4: Suspension Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Suspension process.


Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: Corrective Actions Plan
Within 30 working days from the Suspension notification
Step 2: Validity Check
Progress with Special Audit, Notification
Step 3: Special Audit Coordination
Within 10 working days from the communication of corrective action plans
NIA Certification Suspension until the end of the period of validity, Notification
1
A
Step 1: Corrective Actions Plan (CAP) – The organization submits the CAP
The organization provides to NCSA and the engaged Accredited Auditor a CAP to address the non-conformities (NCs) reported by NCSA within 30 working days from the Suspension notification. If no response is received, NCSA concludes based on the available information.
Step 2: Validity Check - NCSA verifies the period between suspension date and NIA Certificate of Compliance validity
NCSA checks if the period separating the suspension date from the date of end of the period of validity of the NIA Certificate of Compliance is shorter than 6 months to decide if a special audit shall be conducted or not to verify the implementation of the CAP.
Step 3: Special Audit Coordination - The organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit
The organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform a special audit for the purpose of reviewing the corrective action plans and its implementation.
NIA Certification Suspension Process Continues ↓ (1 / 4)

Organization	Accredited Auditor	NCSA	Description
			**Step 4: Acceptance Due Diligence - The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms its acceptance** The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms that it is still able to perform the NIA Certification audit activities based on ethics and capabilities checks. **Step 4-b: Accredited Auditor Change - The organization finds an Alternate Accredited Auditor** The organization selects a substitute Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit using the Accredited Auditor change process, if the engaged one cannot continue the engagement. **Step 5: Implement, Evidence and Support - The organization implements the CAP and provides the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit with the evidence and support** The organization implements the CAP within 3 months from the suspension date and provides information to review the CAP and its implementation. **Step 6: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting - The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit performs the Special Audit** The Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit plans, executes and reports on the NIA audit as per the Audit requirements within 1 month from the last implementation date as per the CAP. **NIA Certification Suspension Process Continues ↓ (2 / 4)**

Applicant	Accredited Auditor	NCSA	Description
			**Step 7: Independent Review - NCSA reviews the audit activities** NCSA performs an independent review of the NIA audit activities to determine if it can rely on the audit conclusions of the Accredited Auditor for the NIA Certification decision making process. **Step 8: Decision - NCSA takes a decision on the status of the NIA Certification Suspension** NCSA can decide to: ▪ Request additional work: NCSA issues instruction to perform additional NIA audit and/or review activities; ▪ Withdraw NIA Certification: NCSA notifies the organization of the Withdrawal; ▪ Reduce Scope of NIA Certification: NCSA notifies the organization that it reduced the scope of the NIA Certification and bills the Reinstatement Fee; ▪ Reinstate the NIA Certification: NCSA notifies the organization of the decision to reinstate and bills the Reinstatement Fee. The Applicant has the right to appeal the decision. **NIA Certification Suspension Process Continues ↓ (3 / 4)**

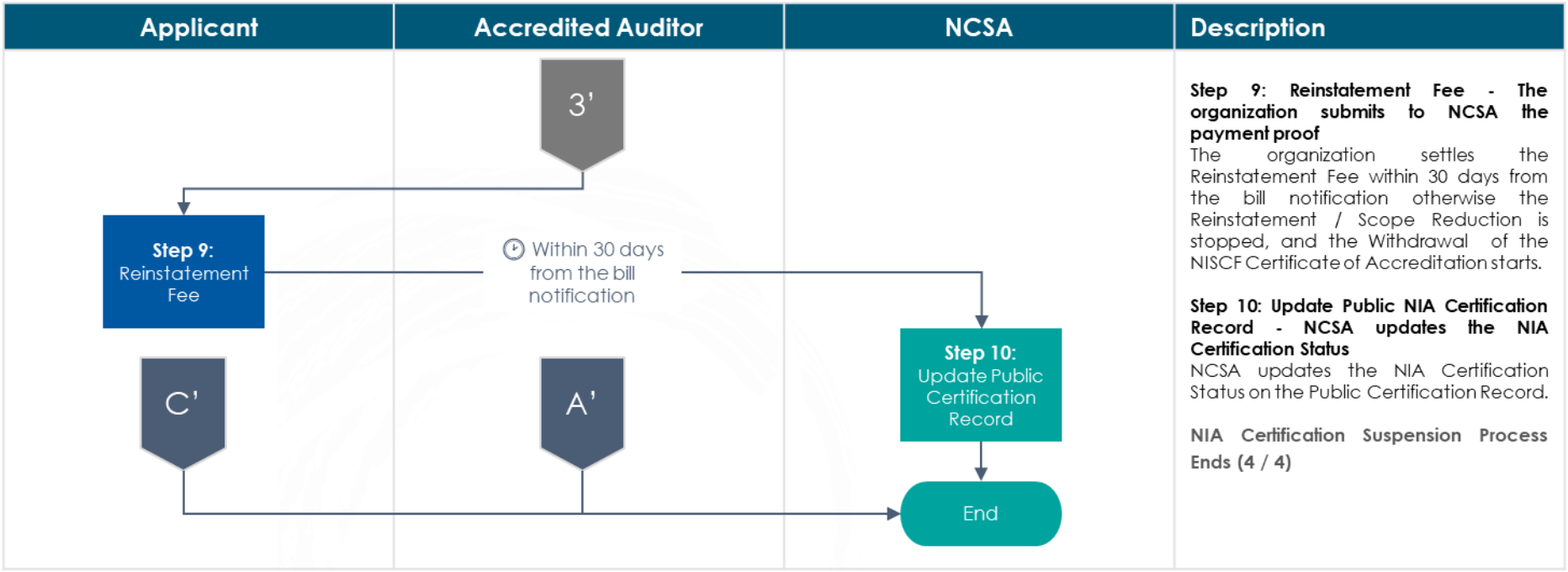


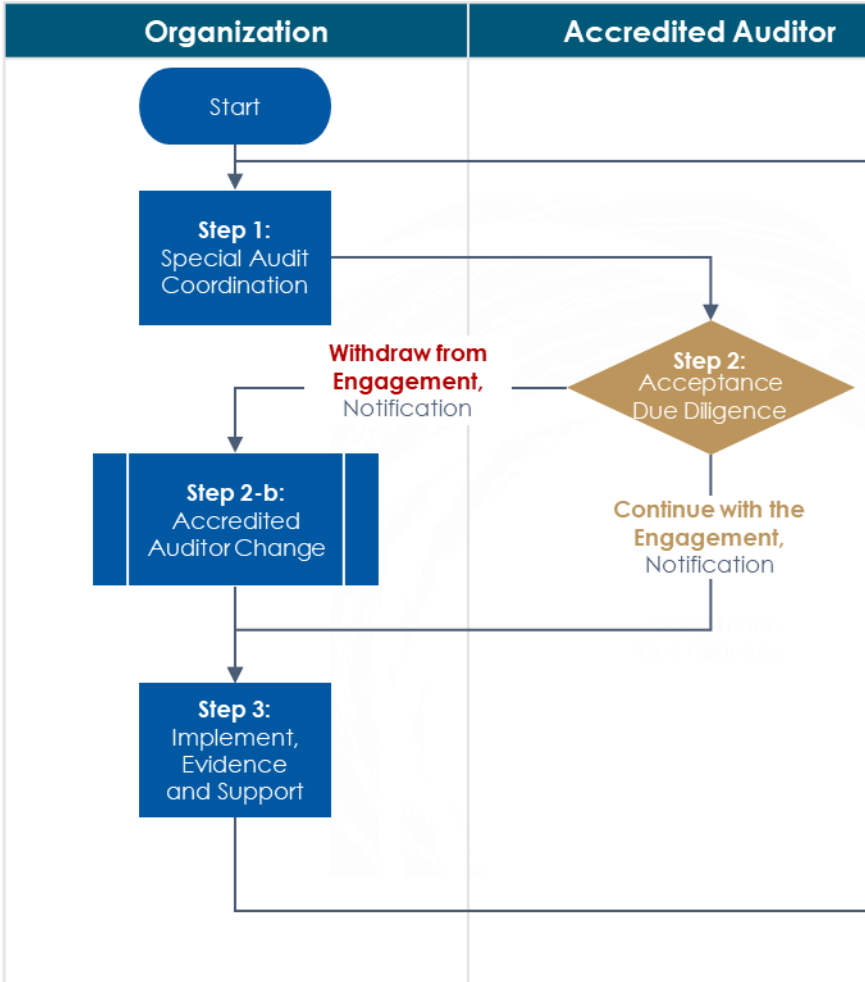
Figure 4: Suspension Process

4.2.4. NIA Certification Special Audit Process

The NIA Certification Special Audit process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization, Accredited Auditor, and the actions that NCSA will take during unplanned or exceptional situations during the Certification lifecycle (e.g., Requests for Scope Expansion, Changes affecting the Certification, Complaints investigations…).

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in sections 4.2.4.4, 4.2.4.5 and 4.2.4.7 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 5: Special Audit Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the NIA Certification Special Audit Process.


Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Special Audit Notification
Step 1: Special Audit Coordination
Withdraw from Engagement, Notification
Step 2: Acceptance Due Diligence
Step 2-b: Accredited Auditor Change
Continue with the Engagement, Notification
Step 3: Implement, Evidence and Support
1
Step 1: Special Audit Coordination - The organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit
The organization coordinates with the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform a special audit as per the instruction from NCSA.
Step 2: Acceptance Due Diligence - The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms its acceptance
The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit re-confirms that it is still able to perform the NIA Certification audit activities based on ethics and capabilities checks.
Step 2-b: Accredited Auditor Change - The organization finds an Alternate Accredited Auditor
The organization selects a substitute Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit using the Accredited Auditor change process, if the engaged one cannot continue the engagement.
Step 3: Evidence and Support - The organization provides the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit with the evidence and support
The organization provides the required information to allow the engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform the Special Audit as per NCSA requirements and request and achieve the Special Audit objectives.
NIA Certification Special Audit Process Continues ↓ (1 / 2)

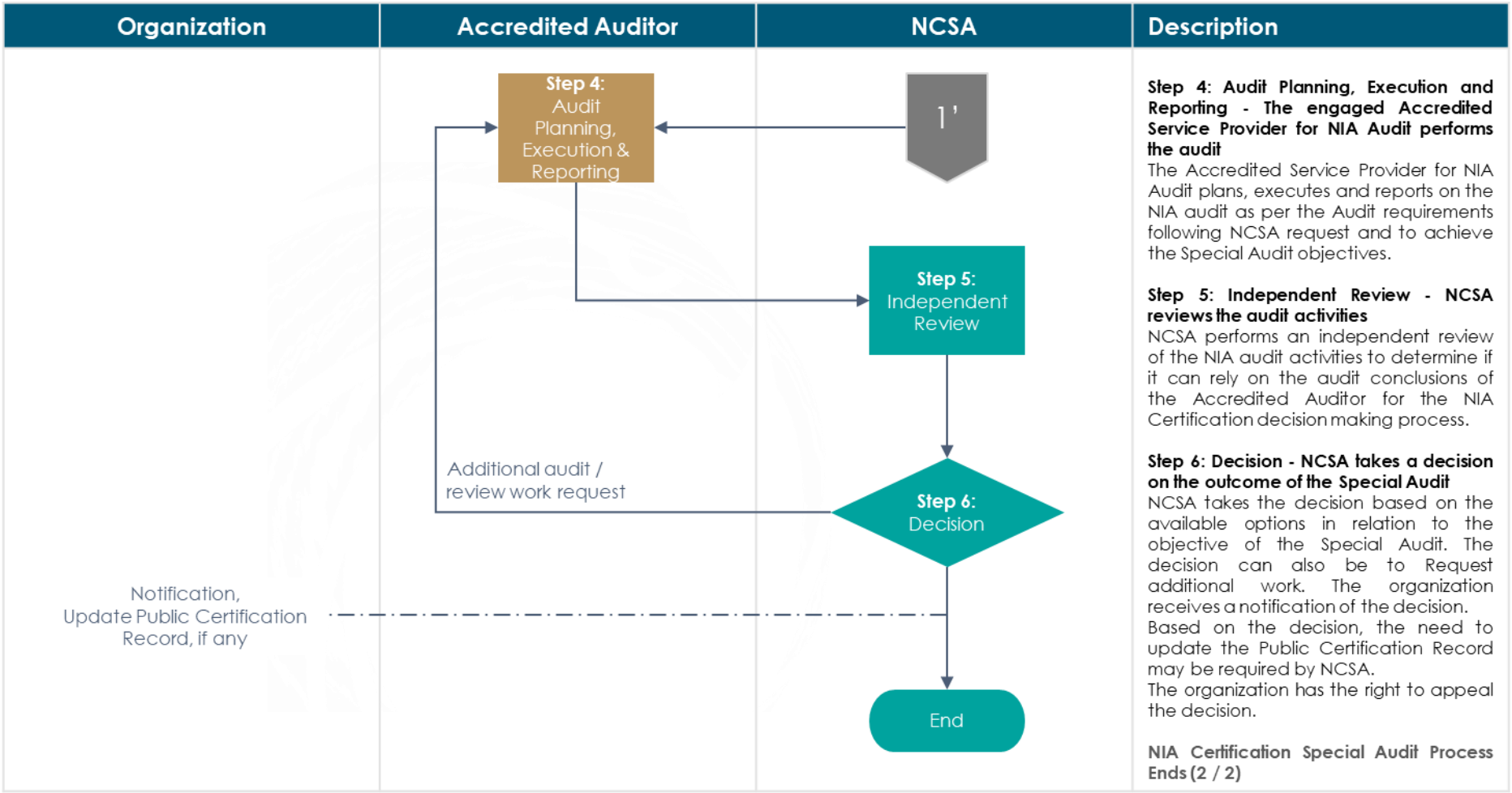


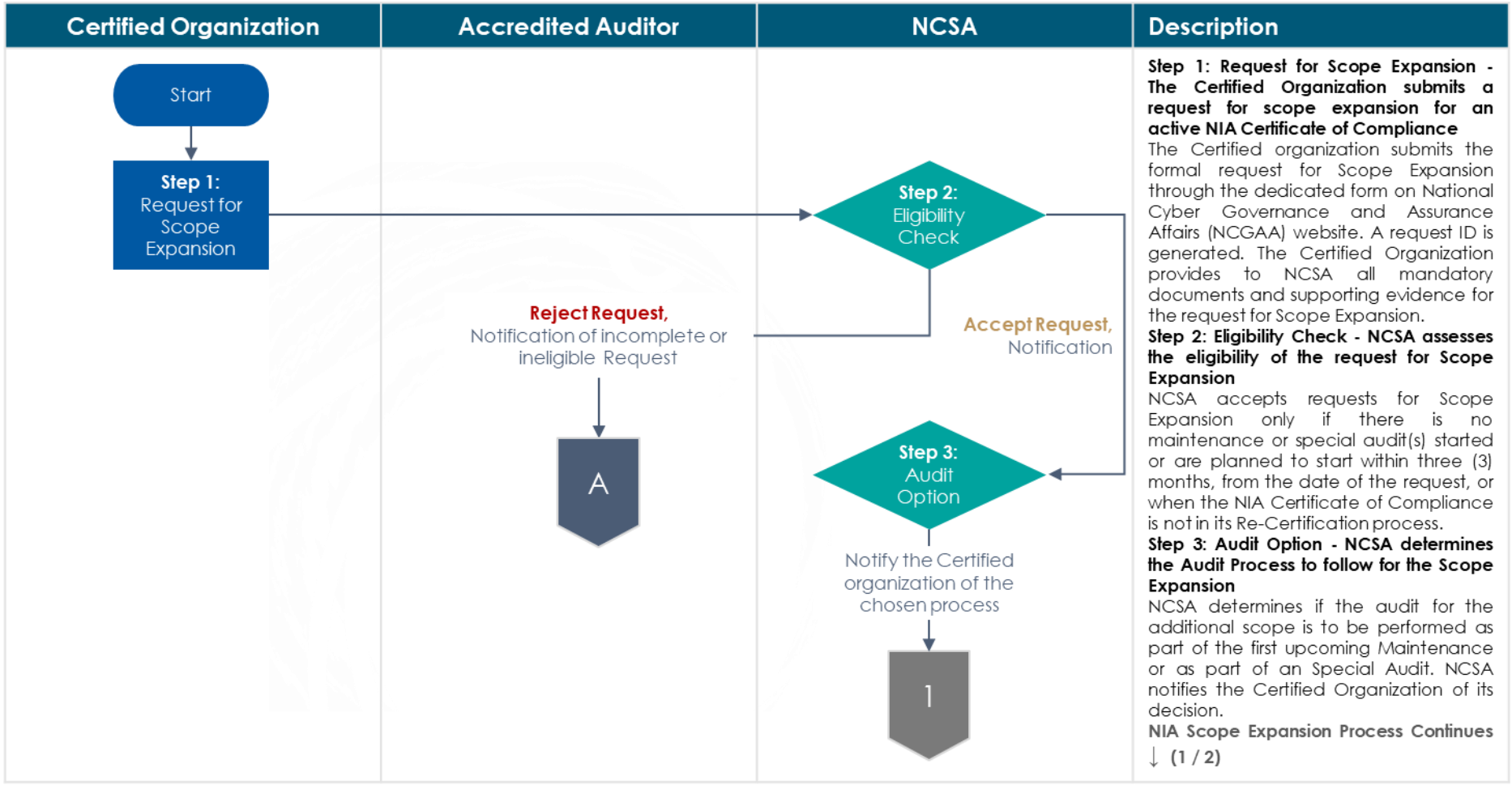
Figure 5: Special Audit Process

4.2.5. NIA Certification Scope Expansion Process

The Scope Expansion process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for Scope Expansion for an active NIA Certificate of Compliance.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4.7 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 6: Scope Expansion Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Scope Expansion process.


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: Request for Scope Expansion
Step 2: Eligibility Check
Reject Request, Notification of incomplete or ineligible Request
Accept Request, Notification
A
Step 3: Audit Option
Notify the Certified organization of the chosen process
1
Step 1: Request for Scope Expansion - The Certified Organization submits a request for scope expansion for an active NIA Certificate of Compliance
The Certified organization submits the formal request for Scope Expansion through the dedicated form on National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) website. A request ID is generated. The Certified Organization provides to NCSA all mandatory documents and supporting evidence for the request for Scope Expansion.
Step 2: Eligibility Check - NCSA assesses the eligibility of the request for Scope Expansion
NCSA accepts requests for Scope Expansion only if there is no maintenance or special audit(s) started or are planned to start within three (3) months, from the date of the request, or when the NIA Certificate of Compliance is not in its Re-Certification process.
Step 3: Audit Option - NCSA determines the Audit Process to follow for the Scope Expansion
NCSA determines if the audit for the additional scope is to be performed as part of the first upcoming Maintenance or as part of an Special Audit. NCSA notifies the Certified Organization of its decision.
NIA Scope Expansion Process Continues ↓ (1 / 2)

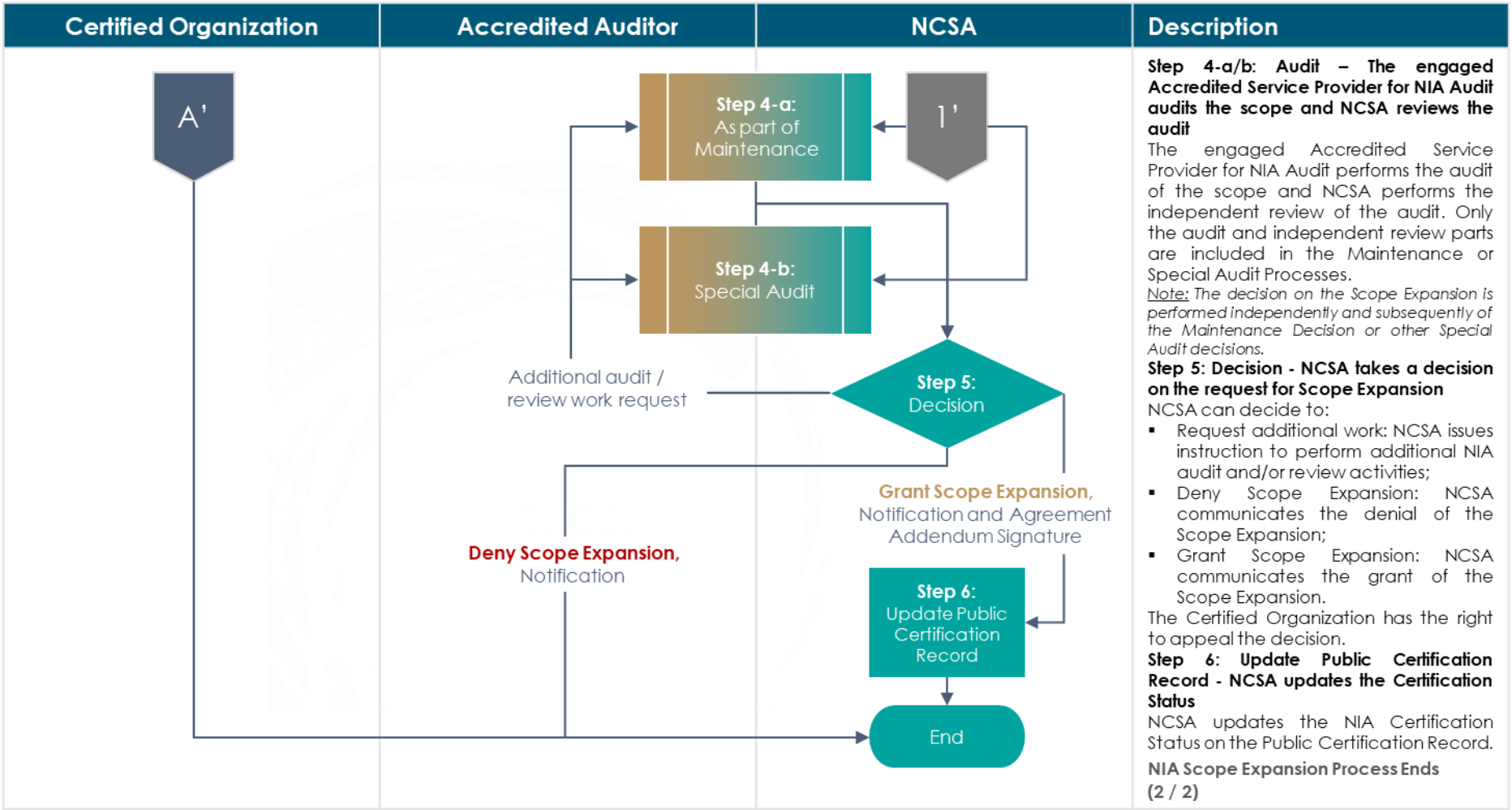


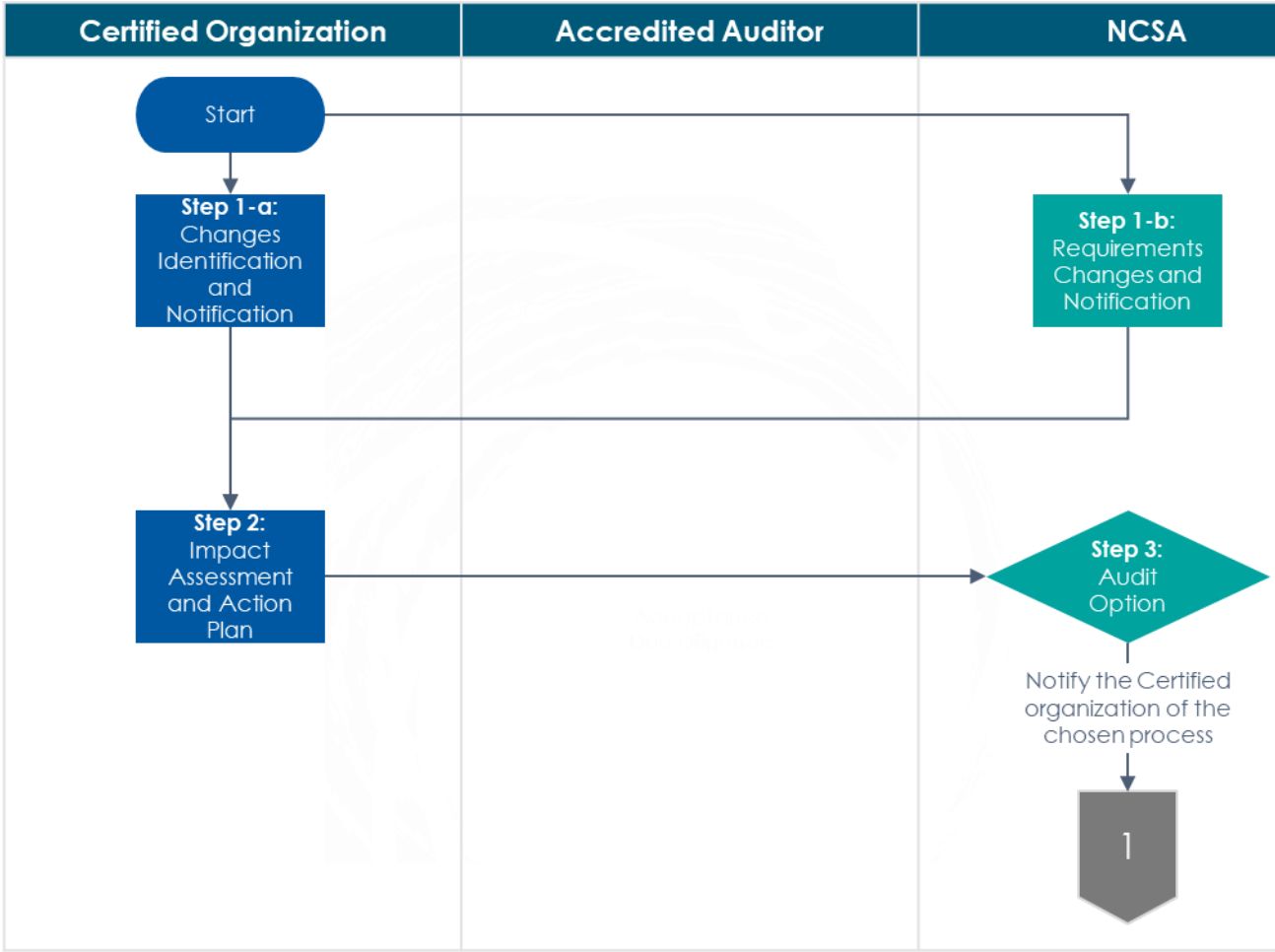
Figure 6: Scope Expansion Process

4.2.6. *Changes Affecting the Scope Process*

The Changes Affecting the Scope process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization, Accredited Auditor and the actions that NCSA will take when change of scope is reported by the organization or NCSA notifies the organization.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4.5 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 7: Changes Affecting the Scope Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Scope Expansion process.


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1-a: Changes Identification and Notification
Step 1-b: Requirements Changes and Notification
Step 2: Impact Assessment and Action Plan
Step 3: Audit Option
Notify the Certified organization of the chosen process
1
Step 1-a/b: Changes and Notification - The Certified Organization identifies the changes and communicates then to NCSA or NCSA changes requirements and notifies the Certified Organization
The Certified organization identifies changes that may affect the scope and notifies NCSA. In the case when NCSA updates the requirements that may affect the scope, it notifies the Certified organization
Step 2: Impact Assessment and Action Plan - The Certified Organization assesses the impact of the changes on the scope and communicates an Action Plan
The Certified Organization assesses the impact of the changes on the scope and communicates it to NCSA. It also determines the action required to conform with the new or updated requirements or to continue conformance following the changes, with associated timelines.
Step 3: Audit Option - NCSA determines the Audit Process to follow
NCSA determines if the audit is to be performed as part of the first upcoming Maintenance or as part of an Special Audit. NCSA notifies the Certified Organization of its decision.
Changes Affecting the Scope Process Continues ↓ (1 / 2)

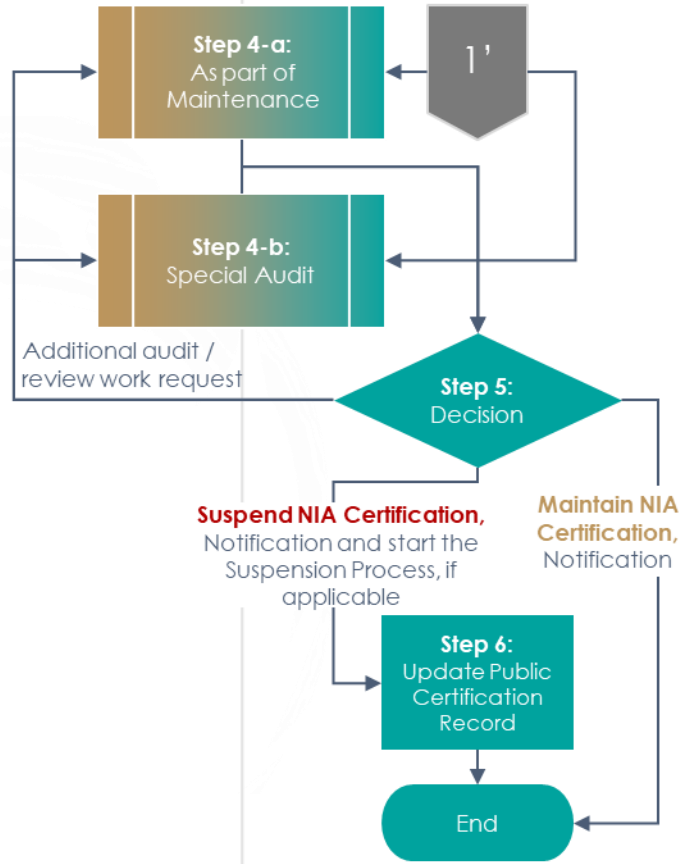
Certified Organization	Accredited Auditor	NCSA	Description
			**Step 4-a/b: Audit – The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit audits the scope and NCSA reviews the audit** The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit performs the audit of the scope and NCSA performs the independent review of the audit. Only the audit and independent review parts are included in the Maintenance or Special Audit Processes. *Note: The decision on the changes is performed independently and subsequently of the Maintenance Decision or other Special Audit decisions.* **Step 5: Decision - NCSA takes a decision** NCSA can decide to: ▪ Request additional work: NCSA issues instruction to perform additional NIA audit and/or review activities; ▪ Suspend NIA Certification: NCSA communicates the Suspension and initiates the Suspension process; ▪ Maintain NIA Certification: NCSA communicates that the NIA Certificate of Compliance is maintained. The Certified Organization has the right to appeal the decision. **Step 6: Update Public Certification Record - NCSA updates the Certification Status** NCSA updates the NIA Certification Status on the Public Certification Record. **Changes Affecting the Scope Process Ends (2 / 2)**

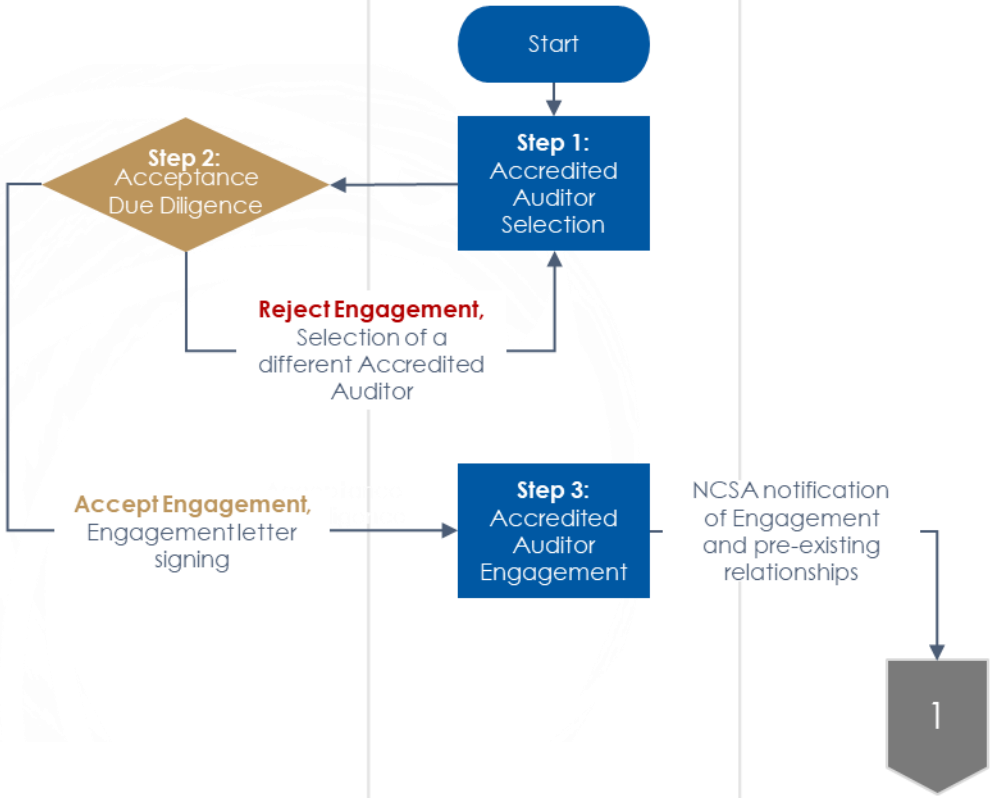
Figure 7: Changes Affecting the Scope Process

4.2.7. Accredited Auditor Change Process

The Accredited Auditor Change Process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization, previous & newly engaged NIA Accredited Auditors, and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for Auditor Change Process for NIA Certification.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 8: Accredited Auditor Change Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Accredited Auditor Change Process.

Previous engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit	New engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit	Applicant / Certified Organization	NCSA	Description
				**Step 1: Accredited Auditor Selection - The Applicant / Certified Organization selects the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit** The Applicant / Certified organization selects a Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform the NIA Certification audit. **Step 2: Acceptance Due Diligence - The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence** The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence. **Step 3: Accredited Auditor Engagement - The Applicant / Certified Organization signs the formal engagement contract with the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit** The Applicant / Certified Organization formally engages the selected Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit by signing the engagement letter and communicates it and any other previous relation it has with the Accredited Auditor to NCSA as per the defined timelines. **Accredited Auditor Change Process Continues ↓ (1 / 2)**

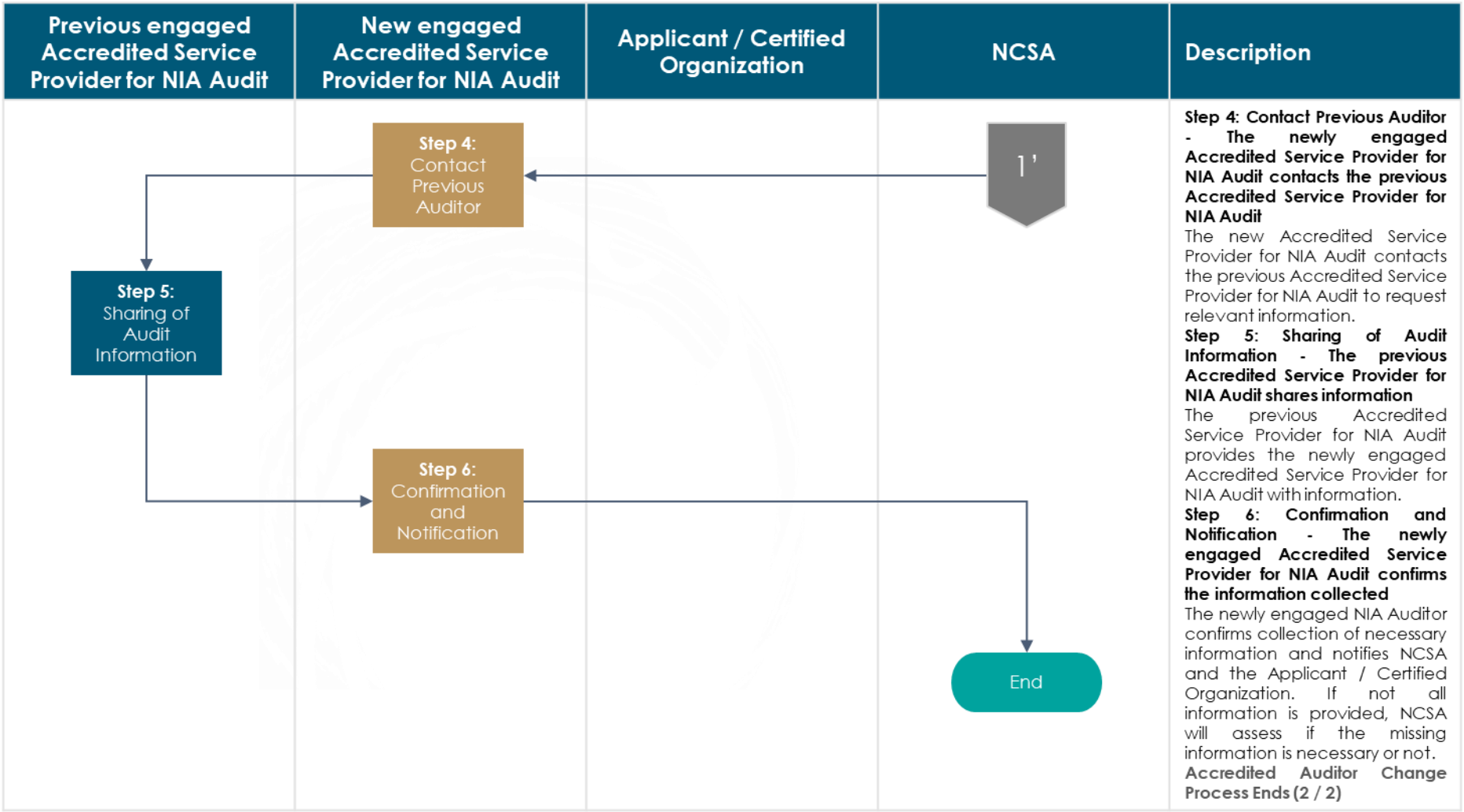


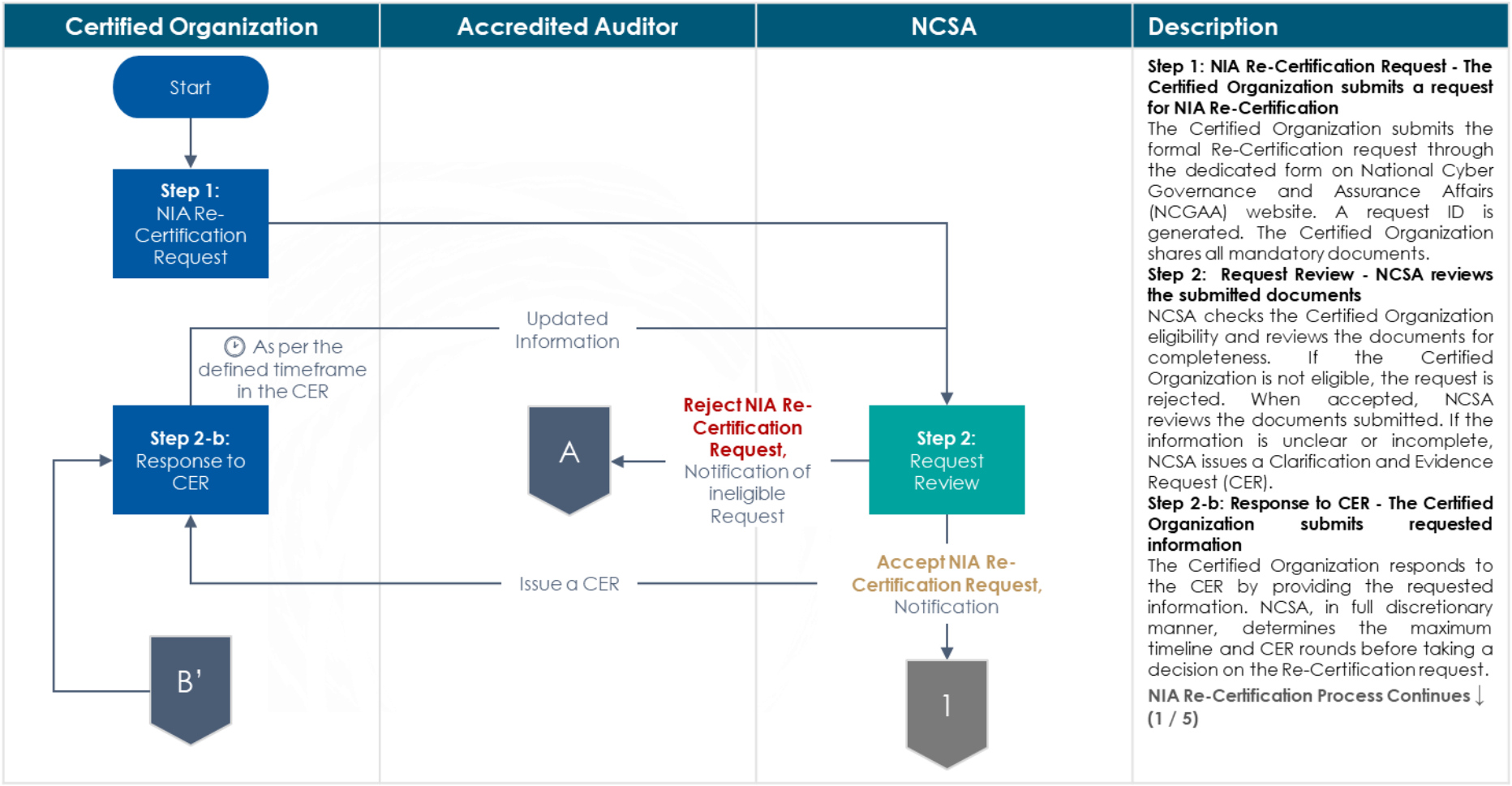
Figure 8: Accredited Auditor Change Process

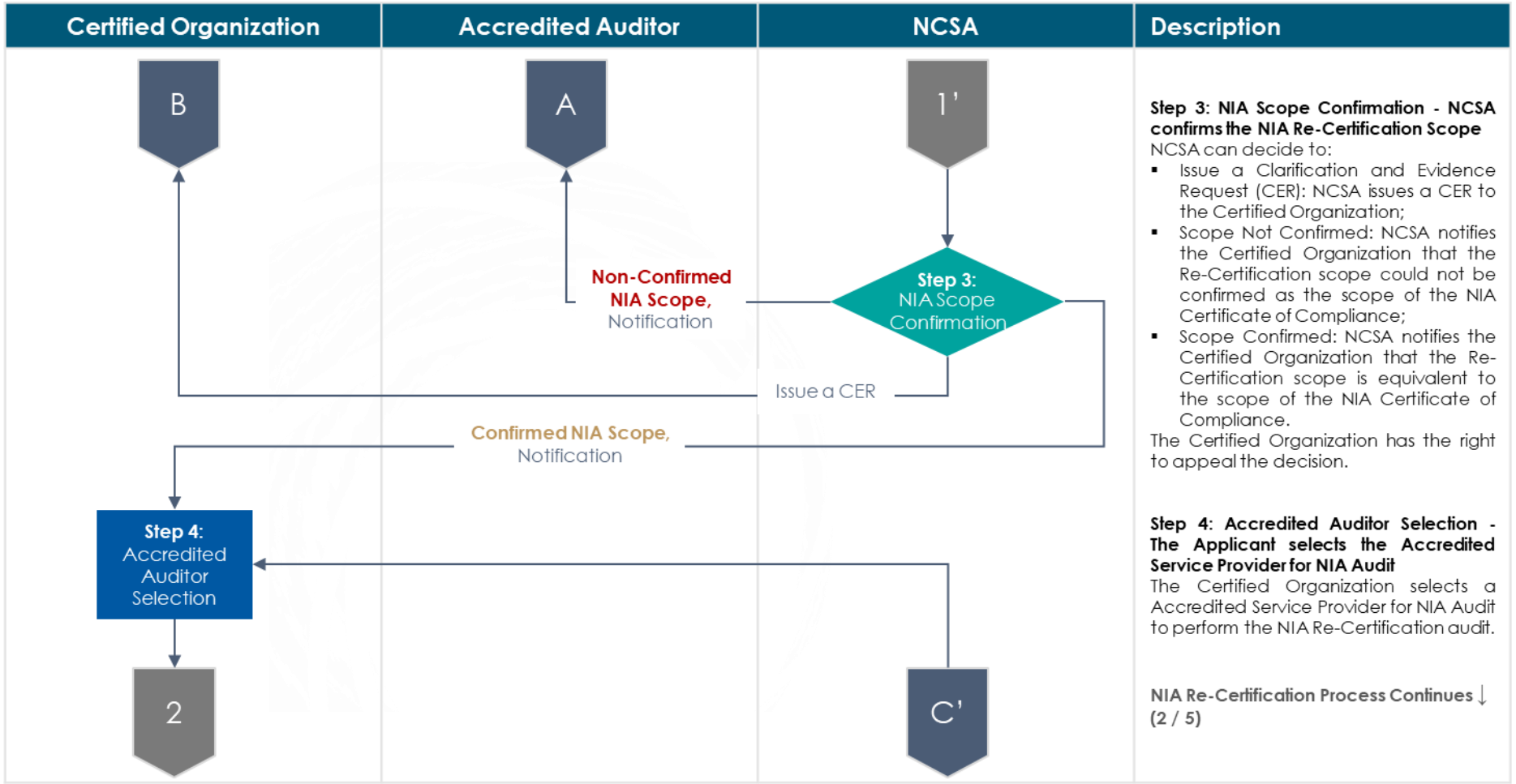
4.2.8. NIA Re-Certification Process

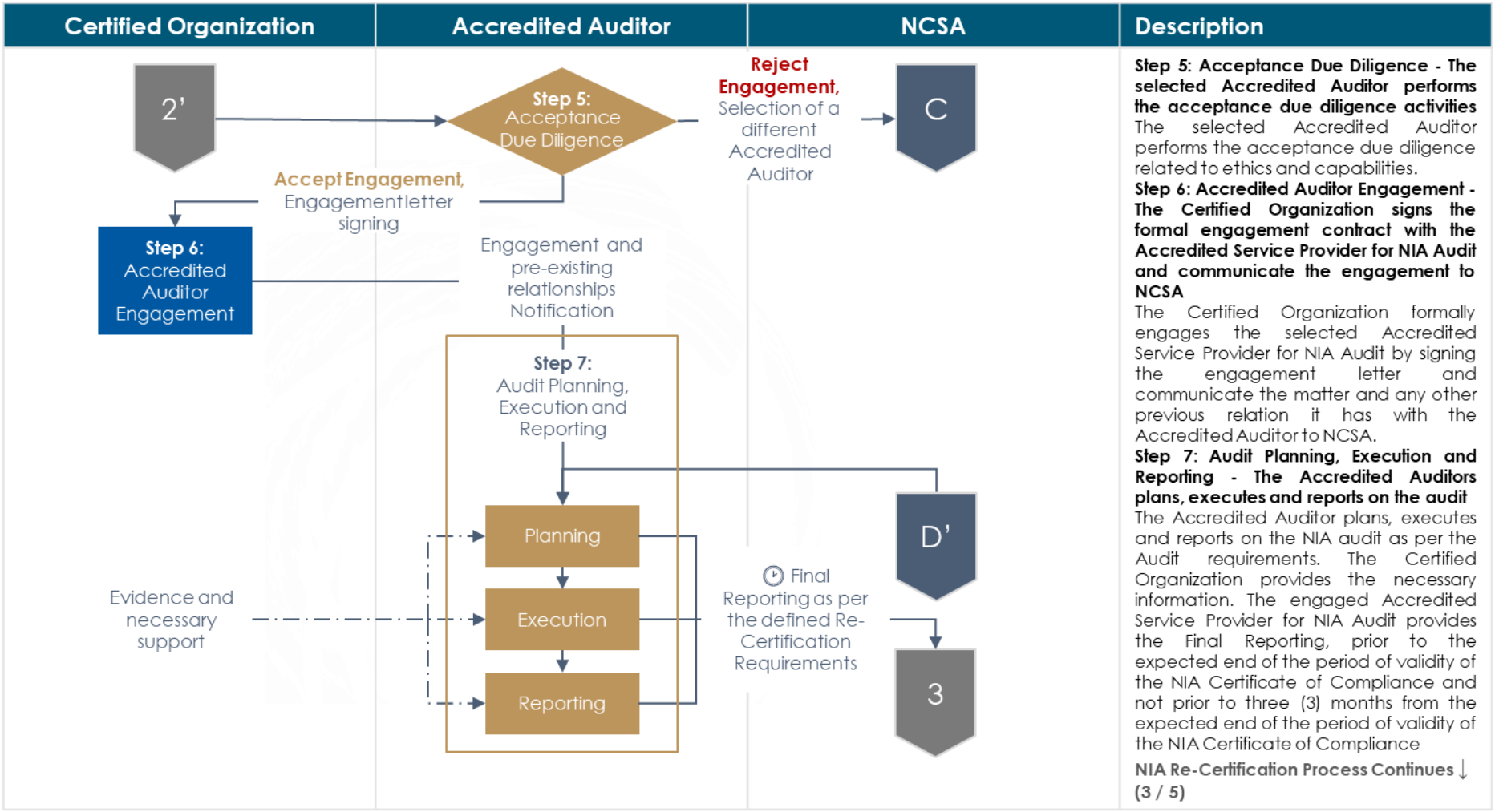
The NIA Re-Certification Process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization and Accredited Auditor and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for NIA Re-Certification Process for a NIA Certificate of Compliance.

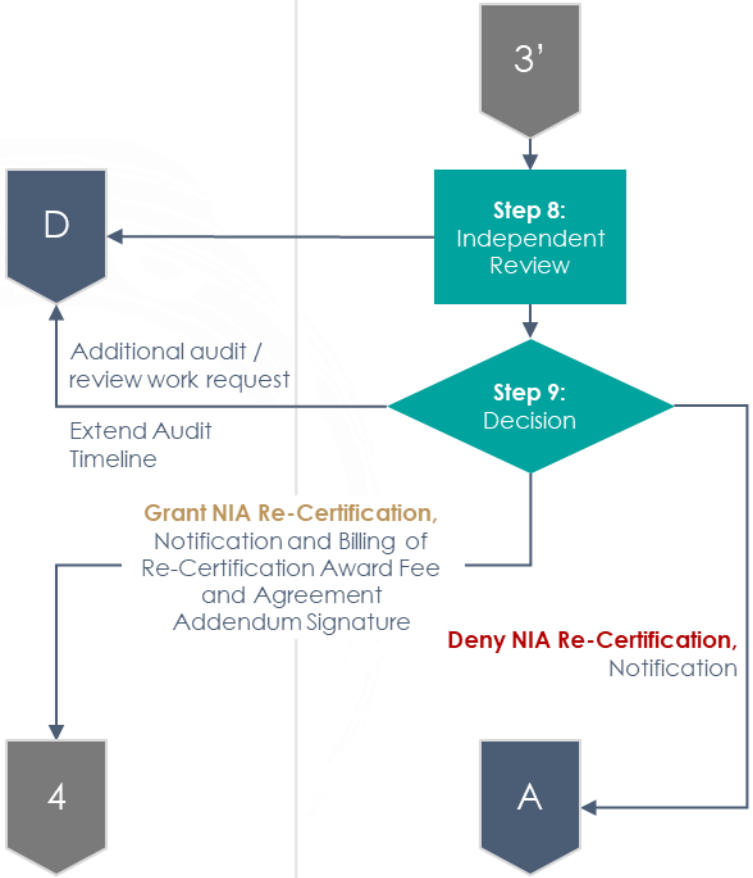
This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.5 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 9: NIA Re-Certification Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Re-Certification process.


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: NIA Re-Certification Request
Updated Information
As per the defined timeframe in the CER
Step 2-b: Response to CER
A
Reject NIA Re-Certification Request, Notification of ineligible Request
Step 2: Request Review
Issue a CER
Accept NIA Re-Certification Request, Notification
B'
1
Step 1: NIA Re-Certification Request - The Certified Organization submits a request for NIA Re-Certification
The Certified Organization submits the formal Re-Certification request through the dedicated form on National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) website. A request ID is generated. The Certified Organization shares all mandatory documents.
Step 2: Request Review - NCSA reviews the submitted documents
NCSA checks the Certified Organization eligibility and reviews the documents for completeness. If the Certified Organization is not eligible, the request is rejected. When accepted, NCSA reviews the documents submitted. If the information is unclear or incomplete, NCSA issues a Clarification and Evidence Request (CER).
Step 2-b: Response to CER - The Certified Organization submits requested information
The Certified Organization responds to the CER by providing the requested information. NCSA, in full discretionary manner, determines the maximum timeline and CER rounds before taking a decision on the Re-Certification request.
NIA Re-Certification Process Continues ↓ (1 / 5)


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
B
A
1'
Non-Confirmed NIA Scope, Notification
Step 3: NIA Scope Confirmation
Issue a CER
Confirmed NIA Scope, Notification
Step 4: Accredited Auditor Selection
2
C'
Step 3: NIA Scope Confirmation - NCSA confirms the NIA Re-Certification Scope
NCSA can decide to:
Issue a Clarification and Evidence Request (CER): NCSA issues a CER to the Certified Organization;
Scope Not Confirmed: NCSA notifies the Certified Organization that the Re-Certification scope could not be confirmed as the scope of the NIA Certificate of Compliance;
Scope Confirmed: NCSA notifies the Certified Organization that the Re-Certification scope is equivalent to the scope of the NIA Certificate of Compliance.
The Certified Organization has the right to appeal the decision.
Step 4: Accredited Auditor Selection - The Applicant selects the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit
The Certified Organization selects a Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit to perform the NIA Re-Certification audit.
NIA Re-Certification Process Continues ↓ (2 / 5)


Certified Organization
Accredited Auditor
NCSA
Description
2'
Step 5: Acceptance Due Diligence
Reject Engagement, Selection of a different Accredited Auditor
C
Accept Engagement, Engagement letter signing
Step 6: Accredited Auditor Engagement
Engagement and pre-existing relationships Notification
Step 7: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting
Planning
Execution
Reporting
Evidence and necessary support
Final Reporting as per the defined Re-Certification Requirements
D'
3
Step 5: Acceptance Due Diligence - The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence activities
The selected Accredited Auditor performs the acceptance due diligence related to ethics and capabilities.
Step 6: Accredited Auditor Engagement - The Certified Organization signs the formal engagement contract with the Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit and communicate the engagement to NCSA
The Certified Organization formally engages the selected Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit by signing the engagement letter and communicate the matter and any other previous relation it has with the Accredited Auditor to NCSA.
Step 7: Audit Planning, Execution and Reporting - The Accredited Auditors plans, executes and reports on the audit
The Accredited Auditor plans, executes and reports on the NIA audit as per the Audit requirements. The Certified Organization provides the necessary information. The engaged Accredited Service Provider for NIA Audit provides the Final Reporting, prior to the expected end of the period of validity of the NIA Certificate of Compliance and not prior to three (3) months from the expected end of the period of validity of the NIA Certificate of Compliance
NIA Re-Certification Process Continues ↓ (3 / 5)

Certified Organization	Accredited Auditor	NCSA	Description
			**Step 8: Independent Review - NCSA reviews the audit activities** NCSA performs an independent review of the NIA audit activities to determine if it can rely on the audit conclusions of the Accredited Auditor for the NIA Re-Certification decision making process. **Step 9: Decision - NCSA takes the NIA Re-Certification decision** NCSA can decide to: ▪ Request additional work: NCSA issues instruction to perform additional NIA audit and/or review activities; ▪ Extend Audit timeline: When the Final Reporting is not made to NCSA before the end of the period of validity of the NIA Certificate of Compliance, NCSA can extend the timeline to complete the Audit; ▪ Deny NIA Re-Certification: NCSA communicates the denial; ▪ Grant NIA Re-Certification: NCSA communicates the grant of NIA Re-Certification and bills the Re-Certification Award Fee. The Certified Organization has the right to appeal the decision. *Note: The extension of the Audit timeline is used in exceptional cases, and at the sole discretion of NCSA. In this case and until the Re-Certification is granted, the NIA Certification status is expired.* **NIA Re-Certification Process Continues ↓ (4 / 5)**

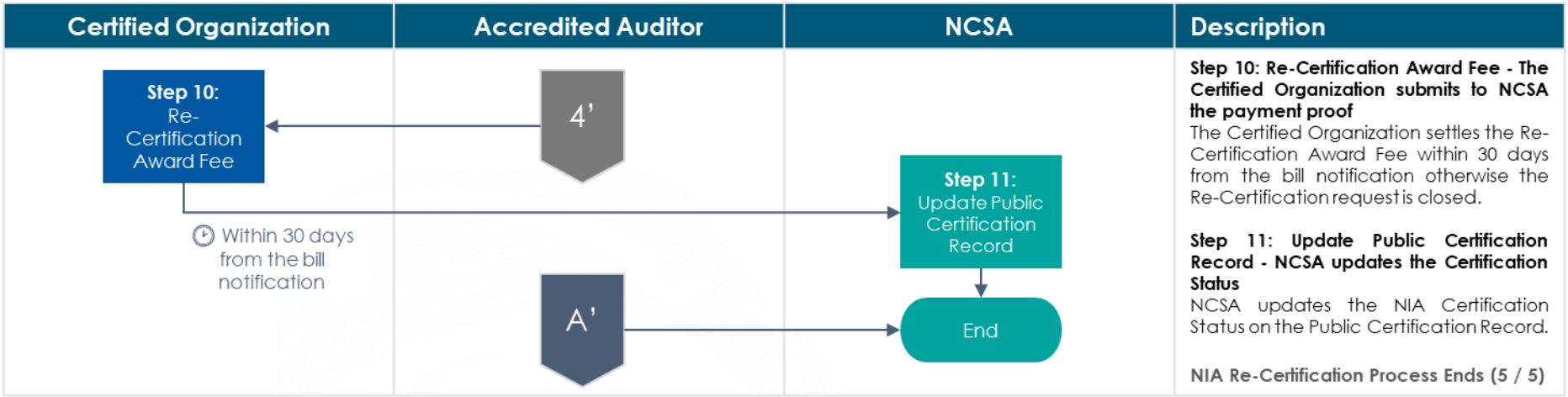


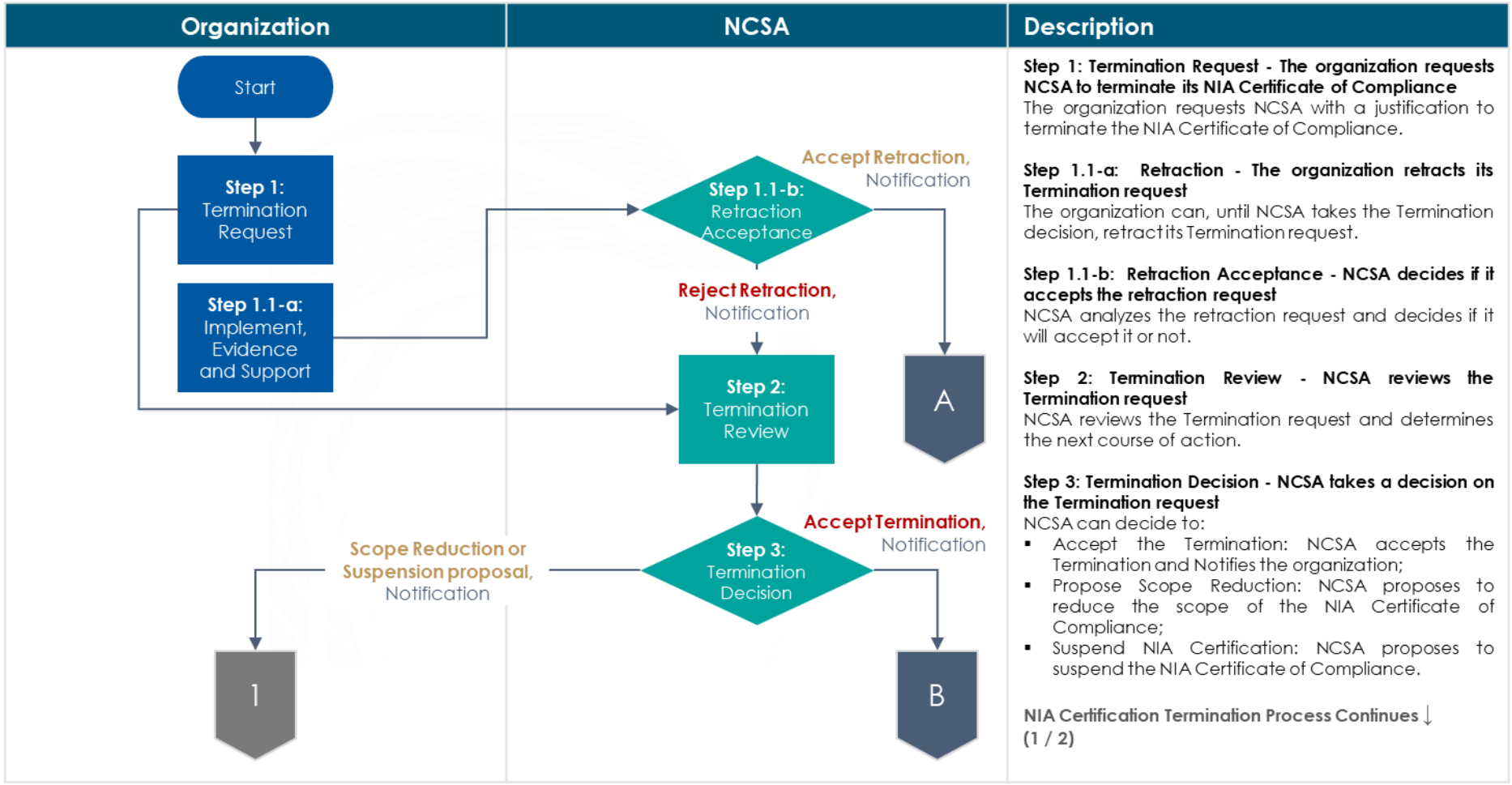
Figure 9: NIA Re-Certification Process

4.2.9. NIA Certification Termination Process

The NIA Certification Termination Process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Certified Organization and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for NIA Certification Termination Process for NIA Certificate of Compliance.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the NIA Certification Service Agreement, the Certification Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4.8 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

The below **Figure 10: NIA Certification Termination Process** dissects the main actions to be taken during the Recertification process.


Organization
NCSA
Description
Start
Step 1: Termination Request
Step 1.1-a: Implement, Evidence and Support
Step 1.1-b: Retraction Acceptance
Accept Retraction, Notification
Reject Retraction, Notification
Step 2: Termination Review
A
Step 3: Termination Decision
Accept Termination, Notification
Scope Reduction or Suspension proposal, Notification
1
B
Step 1: Termination Request - The organization requests NCSA to terminate its NIA Certificate of Compliance
The organization requests NCSA with a justification to terminate the NIA Certificate of Compliance.
Step 1.1-a: Retraction - The organization retracts its Termination request
The organization can, until NCSA takes the Termination decision, retract its Termination request.
Step 1.1-b: Retraction Acceptance - NCSA decides if it accepts the retraction request
NCSA analyzes the retraction request and decides if it will accept it or not.
Step 2: Termination Review - NCSA reviews the Termination request
NCSA reviews the Termination request and determines the next course of action.
Step 3: Termination Decision - NCSA takes a decision on the Termination request
NCSA can decide to:
Accept the Termination: NCSA accepts the Termination and Notifies the organization;
Propose Scope Reduction: NCSA proposes to reduce the scope of the NIA Certificate of Compliance;
Suspend NIA Certification: NCSA proposes to suspend the NIA Certificate of Compliance.
NIA Certification Termination Process Continues ↓
(1 / 2)

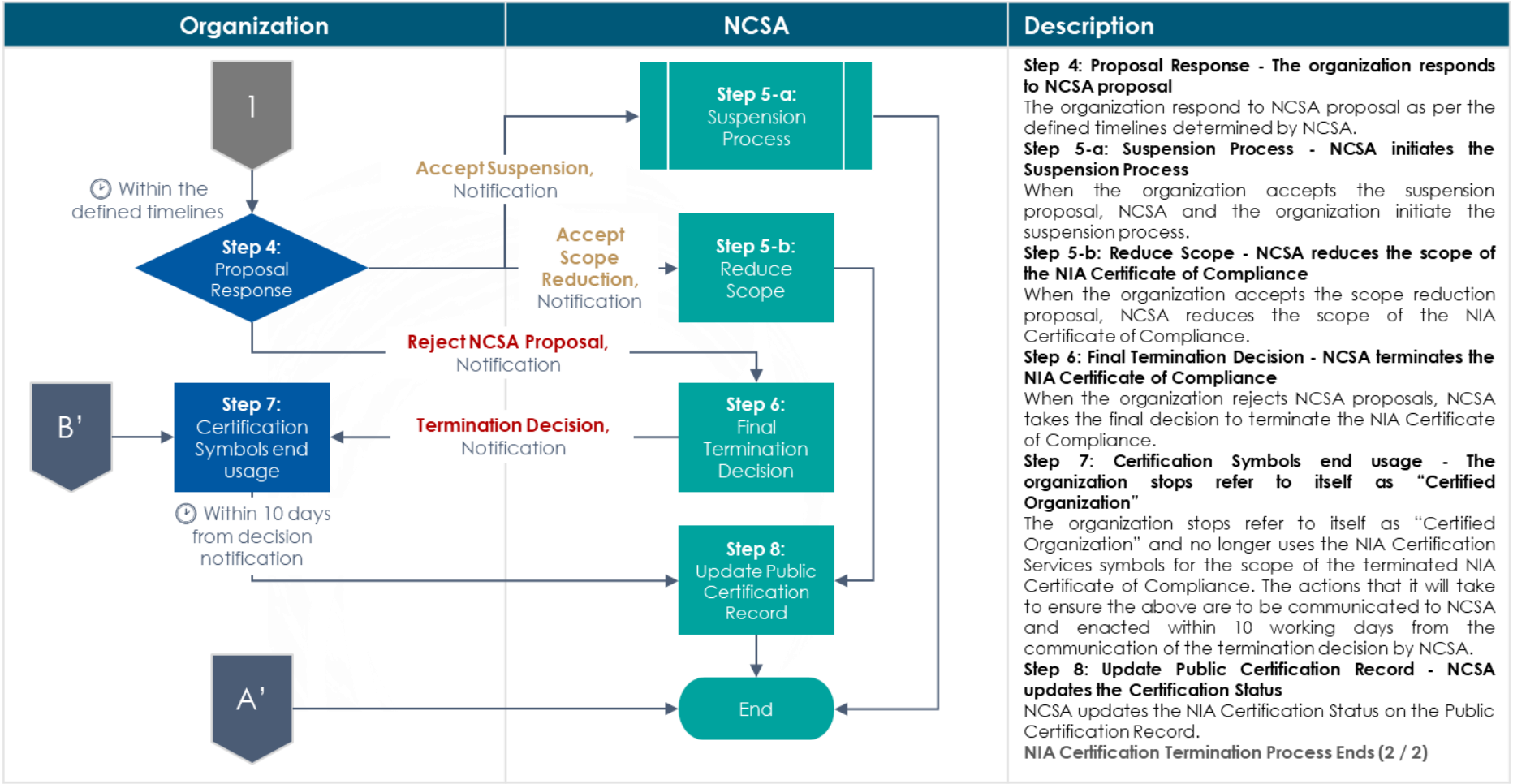


Figure 10: NIA Certification Termination Process

4.3. Complaint and Appeal

4.3.1. Complaint

Complaints related to NISCF's Certification Services are processed following the complaint process detailed in NCSA-NISCF-ACPO (Appeals and Complaints Processes – Public).

4.3.2. Appeal

Appeals related to NISCF's Certification Services are processed following the complaint process detailed in NCSA-NISCF-ACPO (Appeals and Complaints Processes – Public).

5. Compliance and Enforcement

5.1. Compliance Process

All stakeholders to the NIA Certification Service shall conform with the steps and actions defined in this process document.

5.2. Roles and Responsibilities

National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) is responsible for ensuring conformance to this process document.

5.3. Transitioning and effective date

5.3.1. Effective date

This process document is effective from January 1, 2024.

5.3.2. Transition period

The transition will be handled as per the requirements defined in section 5.3.2 of NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public).

5.4. Exceptions and deviations

5.4.1. Exceptions to Policy Statements

Exceptions to this process document shall only be defined by the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) through a policy or a standard and / or any NCSA's organizational structure that has been given the authority over the NISCF or the NIA Certification Service.

5.4.2. Deviation process from Processes steps and actions

Deviation from process document steps and actions shall be formally authorized in writing by the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA).

5.4.3. Sanctions

National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) reserves the right to not accept NISCF Certification Services requests and / or suspend or withdraw Certificates of Certification or any other Certificates, Credentials or Licenses provided by NCSA from NISCF Certification Services stakeholders that do not conform with the steps and actions defined in this process document.

6. Annexes

6.1. Acronyms

CAP	Corrective Actions Plan
CER	Clarification and Evidence Request
NCs	Non-conformities
NCGAA	National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs
NCSA	National Cyber Security Agency
NISCF	National Information Security Compliance Framework
NIA	National Information Assurance

6.2. Reference

Emiri Decree No 1 of year 2021

President of National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) Decision No 3 of year 2022

NCSA-NISCF-CERT-GTXD (General Taxonomy Document for National Certification - Public)

NCSA-NISCF-CERT-GPNC (General Policy for National Certification - Public)

NCSA-NISCF-CERT-SMSC (Standard for Management Systems Certification - Public)

End of Document