



الوكالة الوطنية للأمن السيبراني
National Cyber Security Agency

National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) – Processes for National Accreditation

[NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-POSS]

Process Document

National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA)

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



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National Cyber Security Agency

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National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) has designed and created this publication, titled "National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) – Processes for National Accreditation" - V1.0 - Public, in order to provide the description of the steps to be followed in NISCF Accreditation Operation for NISCF Accreditation Services. This process document shall be read along other relevant NISCF's Accreditation Definitions, Policy, Standards, Agreement and Terms and Conditions.

NCSA is responsible for the review and maintenance of this document.

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LEGAL MANDATE(S)

Based on Emiri Decree No 1 of year 2021, National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) – National Cyber Governance and Cyber Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) is the entity responsible for issuing certificates for Technology and Information Security service providers and Certificates of Compliance with National Information Security standards and policies.

This Process Document has been prepared to take into consideration the current applicable laws of the State of Qatar. If a conflict arises between this document and the laws of Qatar, the latter shall take precedence. Any such term shall, to that extent be omitted from this Document, and the rest of the document shall stand without affecting the remaining provisions. Amendments, in that case, shall then be required to ensure conformance with the relevant applicable laws of the State of Qatar.



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1. Introduction

National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) created its Accreditation Services to provide assurance that Service Providers have the capability and capacity to deliver cyber security related services in a specified subject or areas of expertise.

In effort to improve the Accreditation Services, NCSA developed this document, titled “National Information Security Compliance Framework (NISCF) – Processes for National Accreditation” - V1.0 - Public, to provide the cyber space with clearer processes that describe the steps to be followed in NISCF Accreditation Operation for NISCF Accreditation Services.



2. Purpose and Scope

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide Service Providers with the processes steps to be followed in NISCF Accreditation Operation for NISCF Accreditation Services.

This document provides the necessary steps and key rules for Service Providers required to apply for the NISCF Accreditation Services and walkthrough the NISCF Accreditation Services lifecycle for Accredited Service Providers.

This document does not include specific processes for all NISCF Accreditation Services lifecycle phases. The left-out phases have clear, self-explanatory requirements defined in NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

2.2. Scope

This document applies to all NISCF Accreditation Services that are offered by NCSA under the NISCF.

NCSA defines which NISCF's Services this document applies to.



3. Key Definitions

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







4. Processes

4.1. General Overview

The below **Figure 1: Overview of NISCF's Accreditation Services Lifecycle** provides an overview of the NISCF's Accreditation Services Lifecycle. It represents a graphical simplification of the different phases of the NISCF's Accreditation Services 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 lifecycle, before obtaining the Accreditation.
-  Phases by which an Accreditation shall pass during the Accreditation lifecycle to maintain an active NISCF Certificate of Accreditation or extend the period of validity of such Certificate.
-  Phases that may occur during the Accreditation lifecycle based on NCSA decisions or voluntary requests from the Accredited Service Provider.
-  Phases that put an end to the period of validity of an NISCF Certificate of Accreditation and the Accreditation lifecycle, based on NCSA decisions, voluntary requests from, or simply inaction from the Accredited Service Provider.

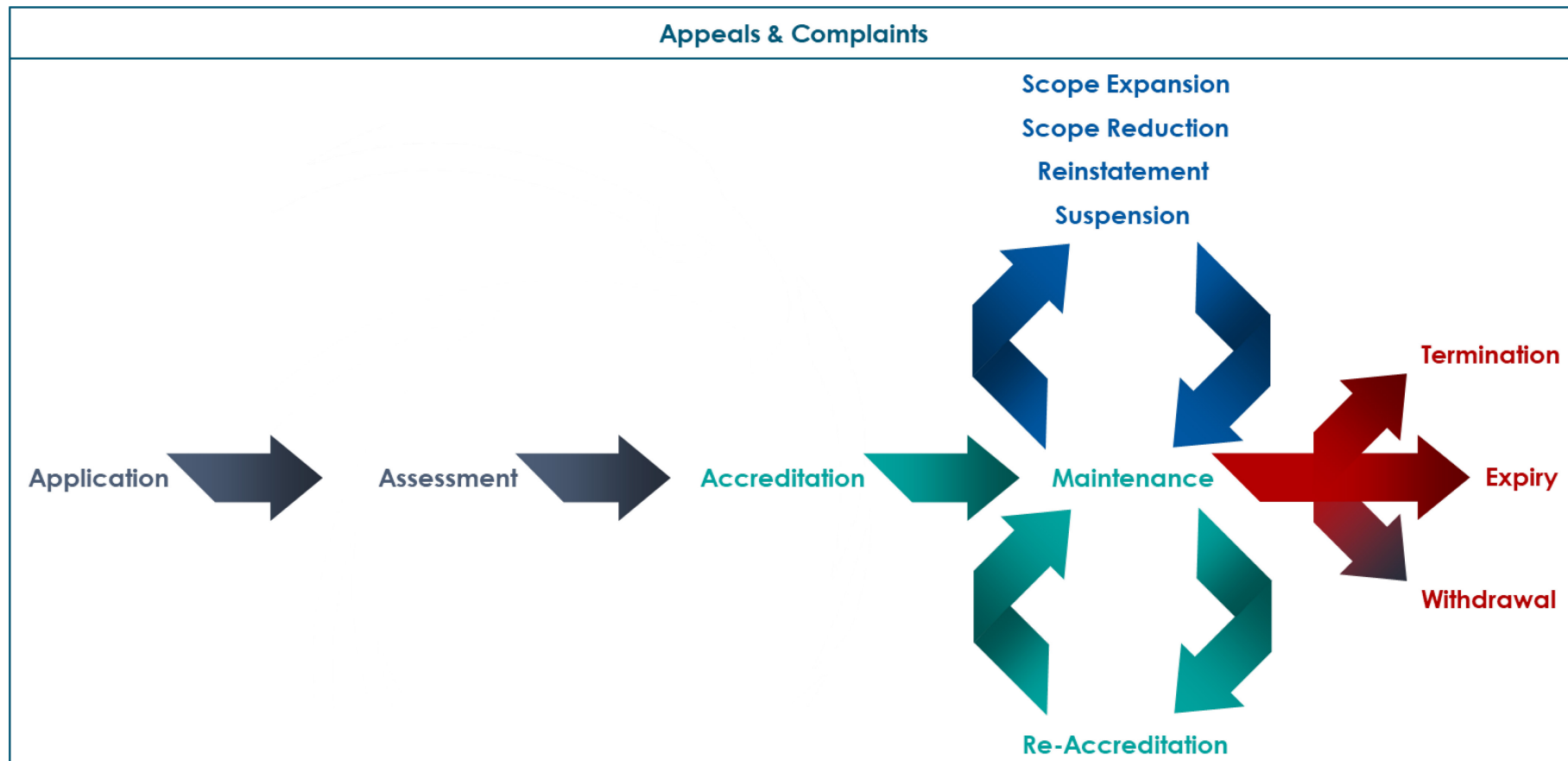


Figure 1: Overview of NISCF's Accreditation Services Lifecycle



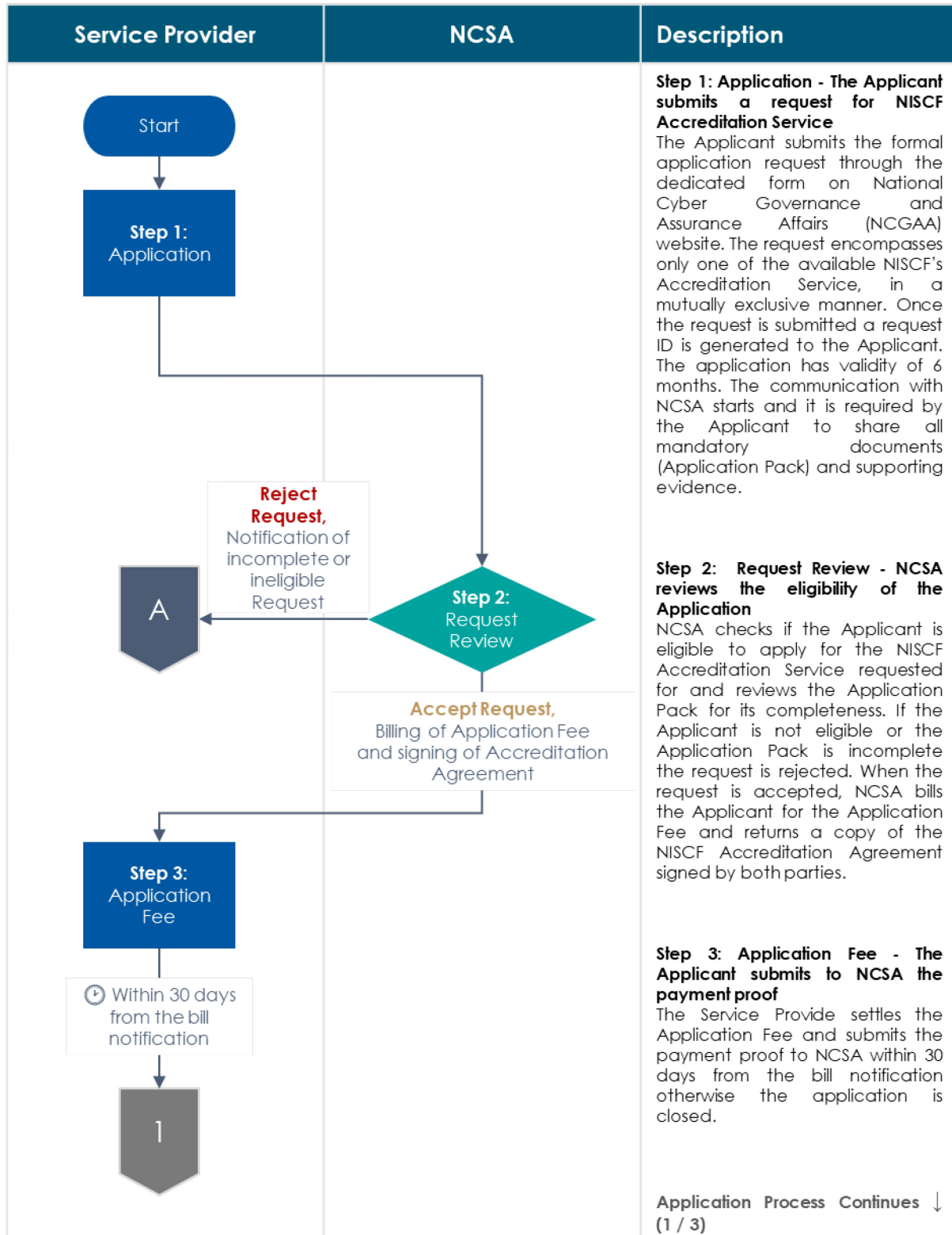
4.2. Accreditation Operation

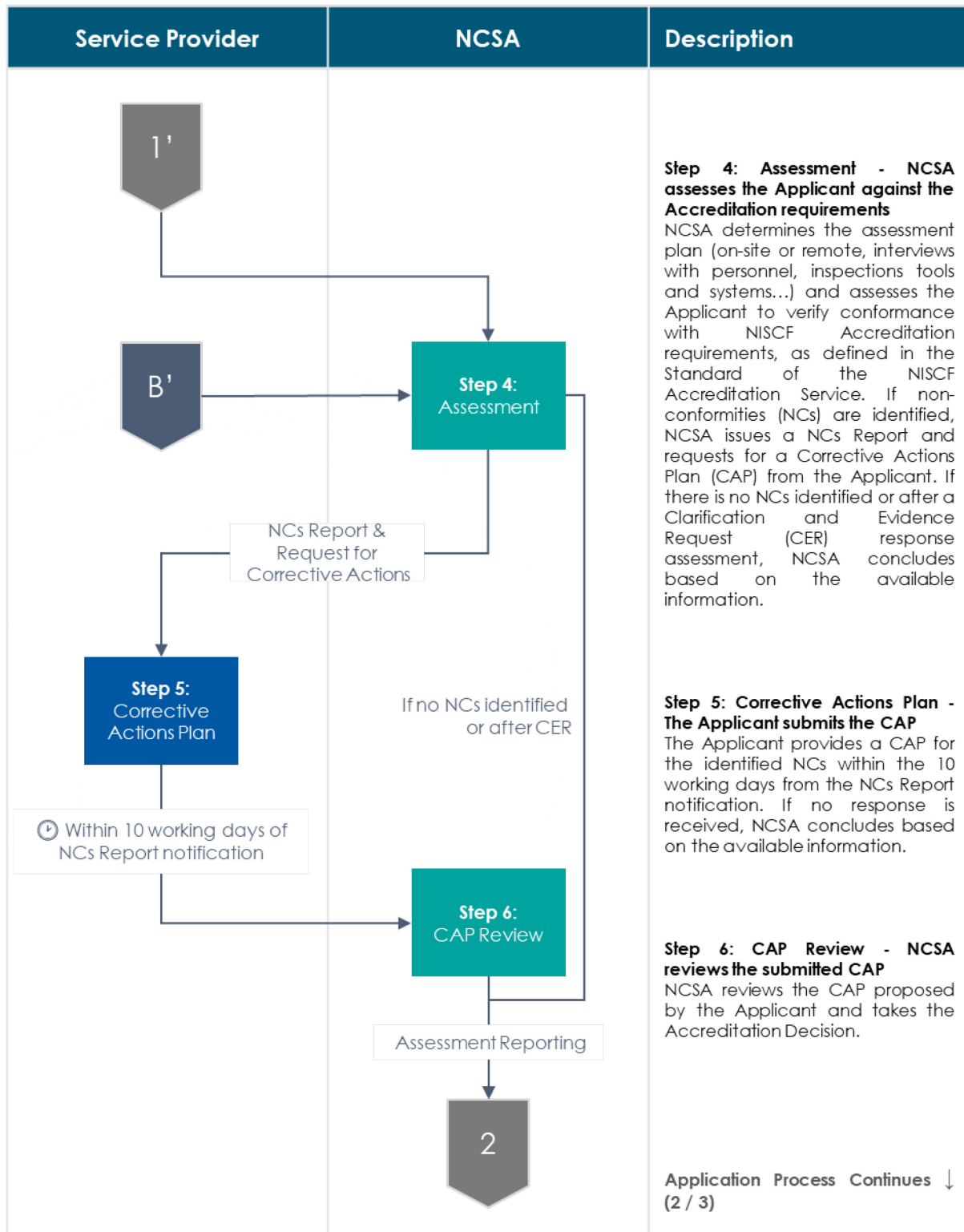
4.2.1. Application Process

The Application process defines the steps that need to be followed by the applicant to NISCF's Accreditation Services and the actions that NCSA will take during an application request for NISCF's Accreditation Services.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.1 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below [Figure 2: Application Process](#) dissects the main actions to be taken during the Application process.





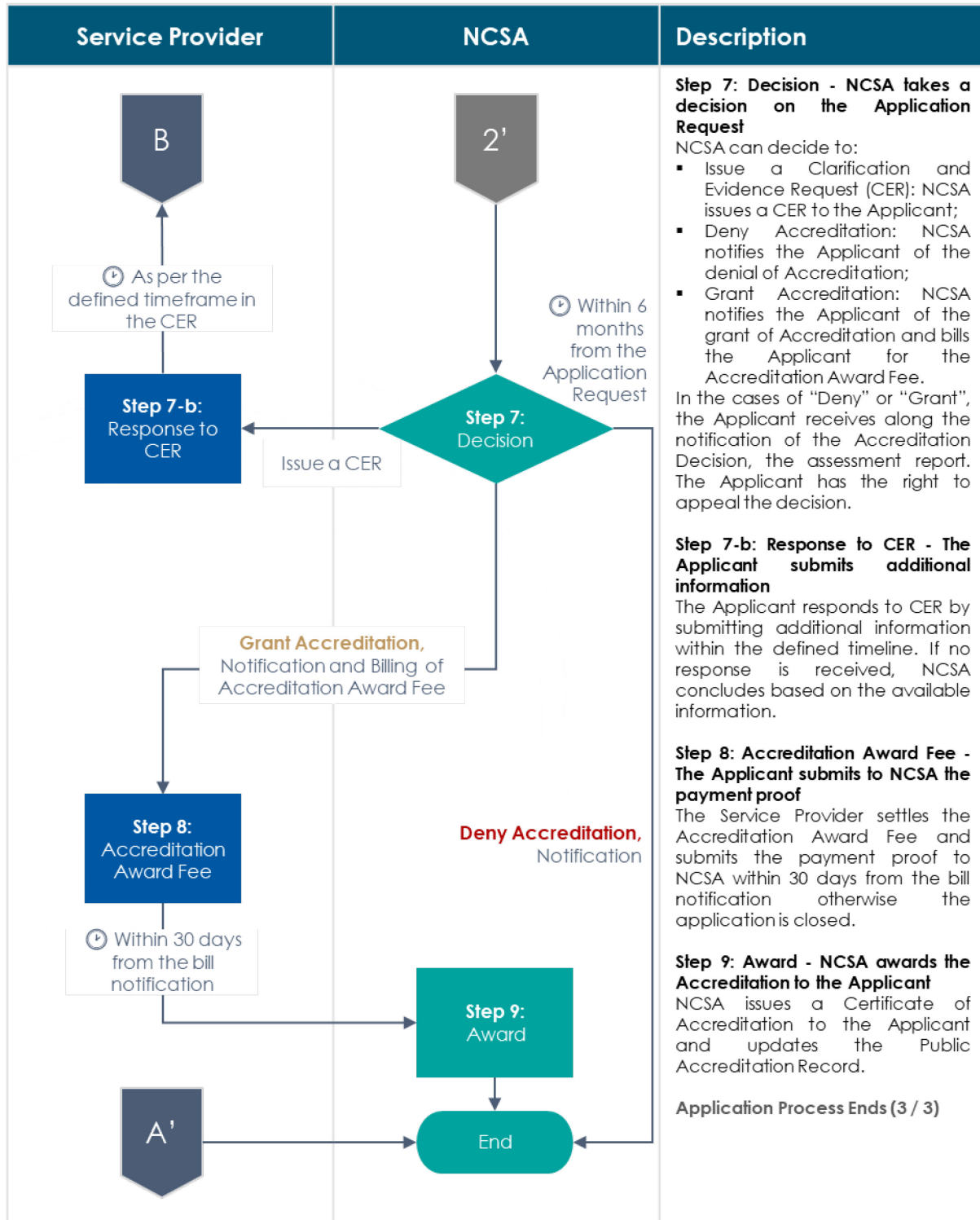


Figure 2: Application Process



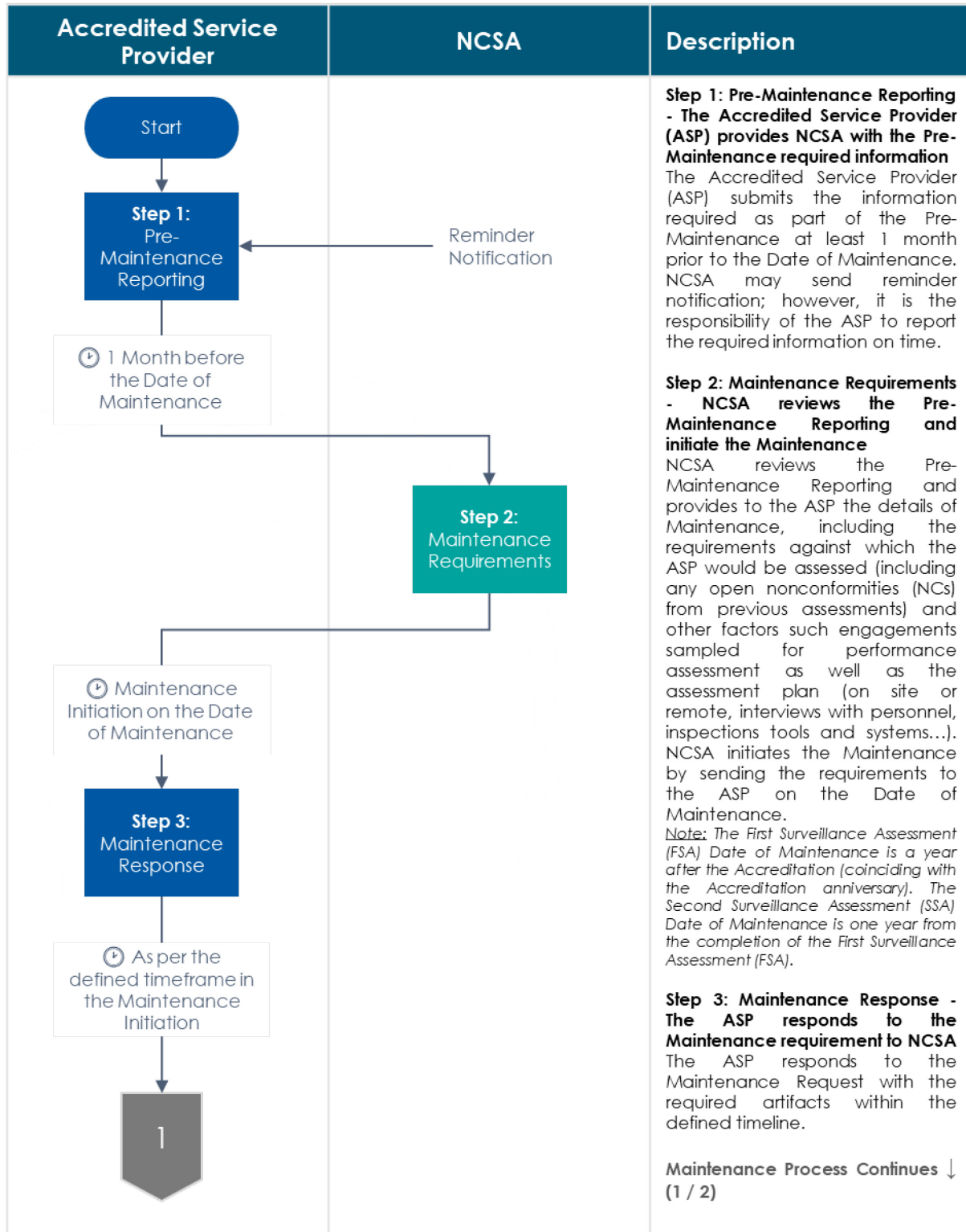
4.2.2. Maintenance

The Maintenance process defines the steps that need to be followed by the Accredited Service Provider and the actions that NCSA will take during the Maintenance of a NISCF Accreditation.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.3.1 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below [**Figure 3: Maintenance Process**](#) dissects the main actions to be taken during the Maintenance process.





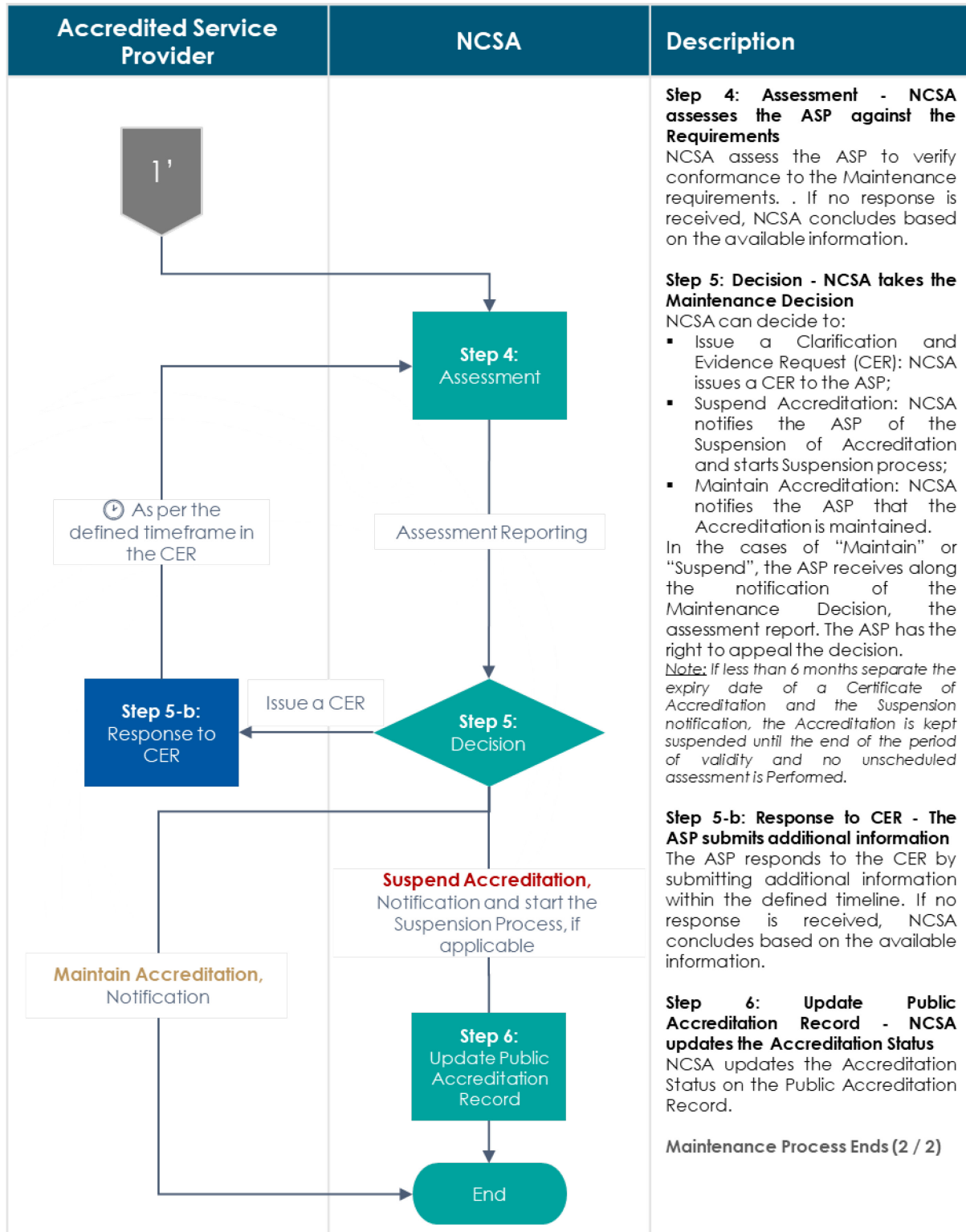


Figure 3: Maintenance Process

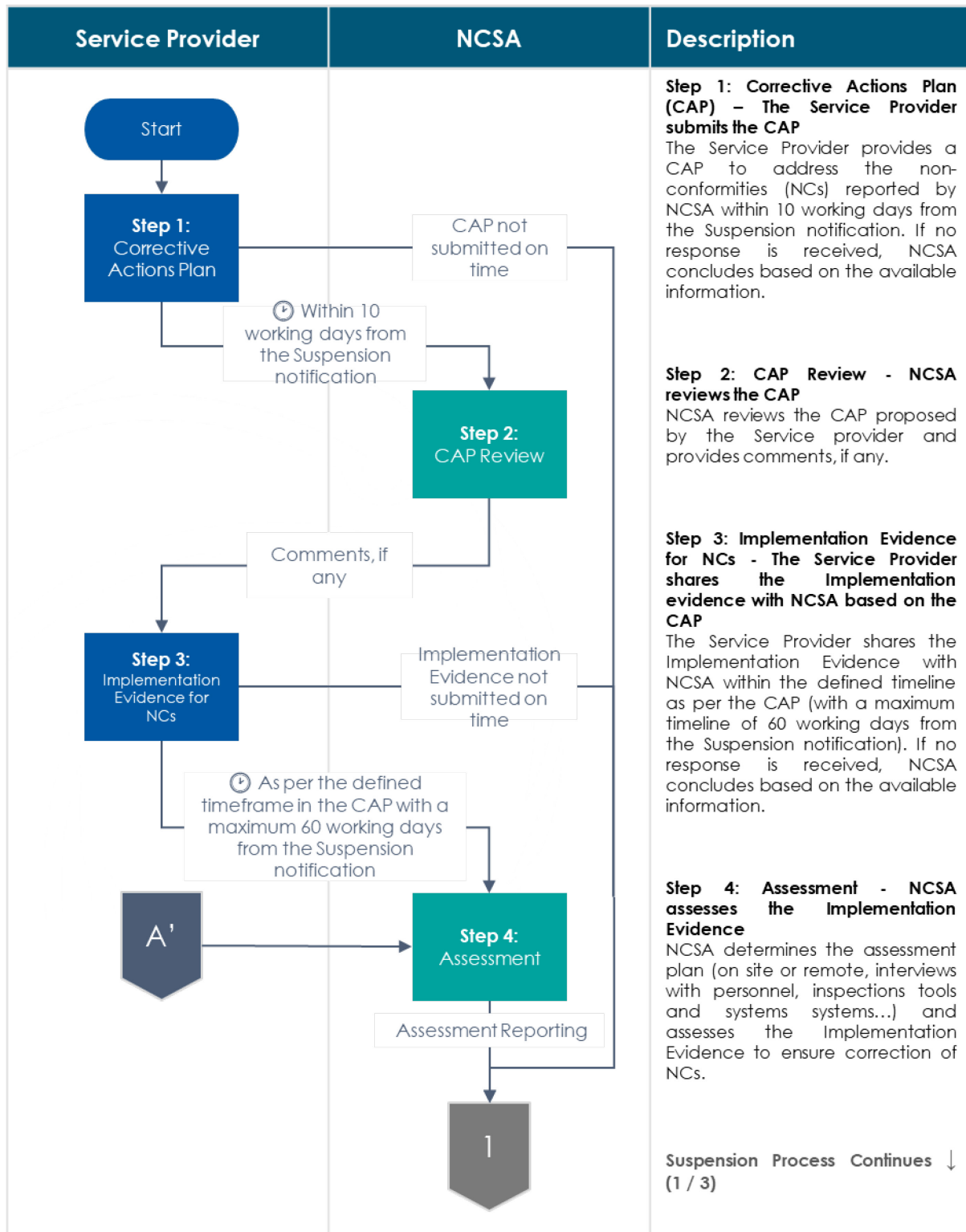


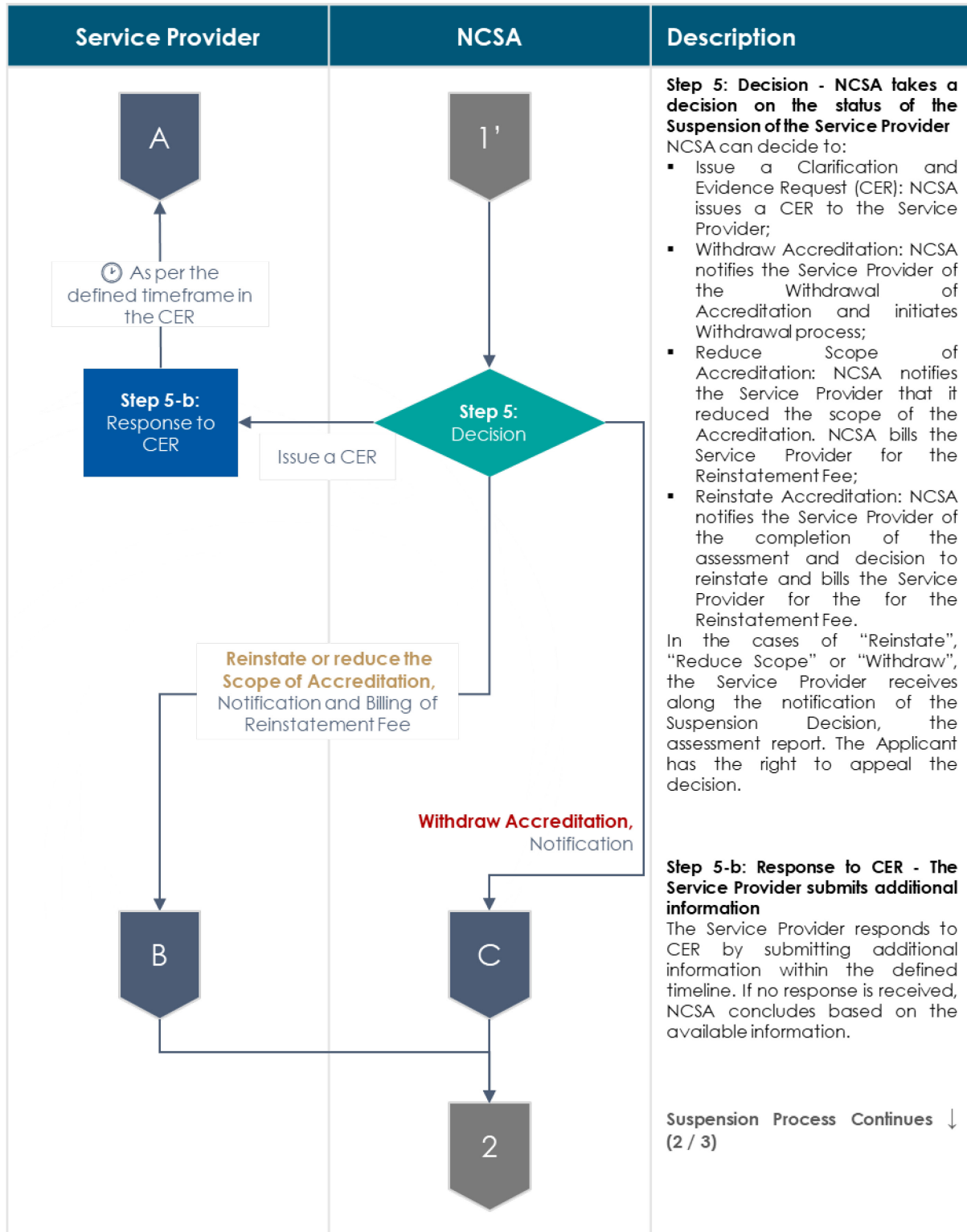
4.2.3. Suspension

The Suspension process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Service Provider whose NISCF Certificate of Accreditation 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 NISCF Accreditation.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.3.2 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below [**Figure 4: Suspension Process**](#) dissects the main actions to be taken during the Suspension process.





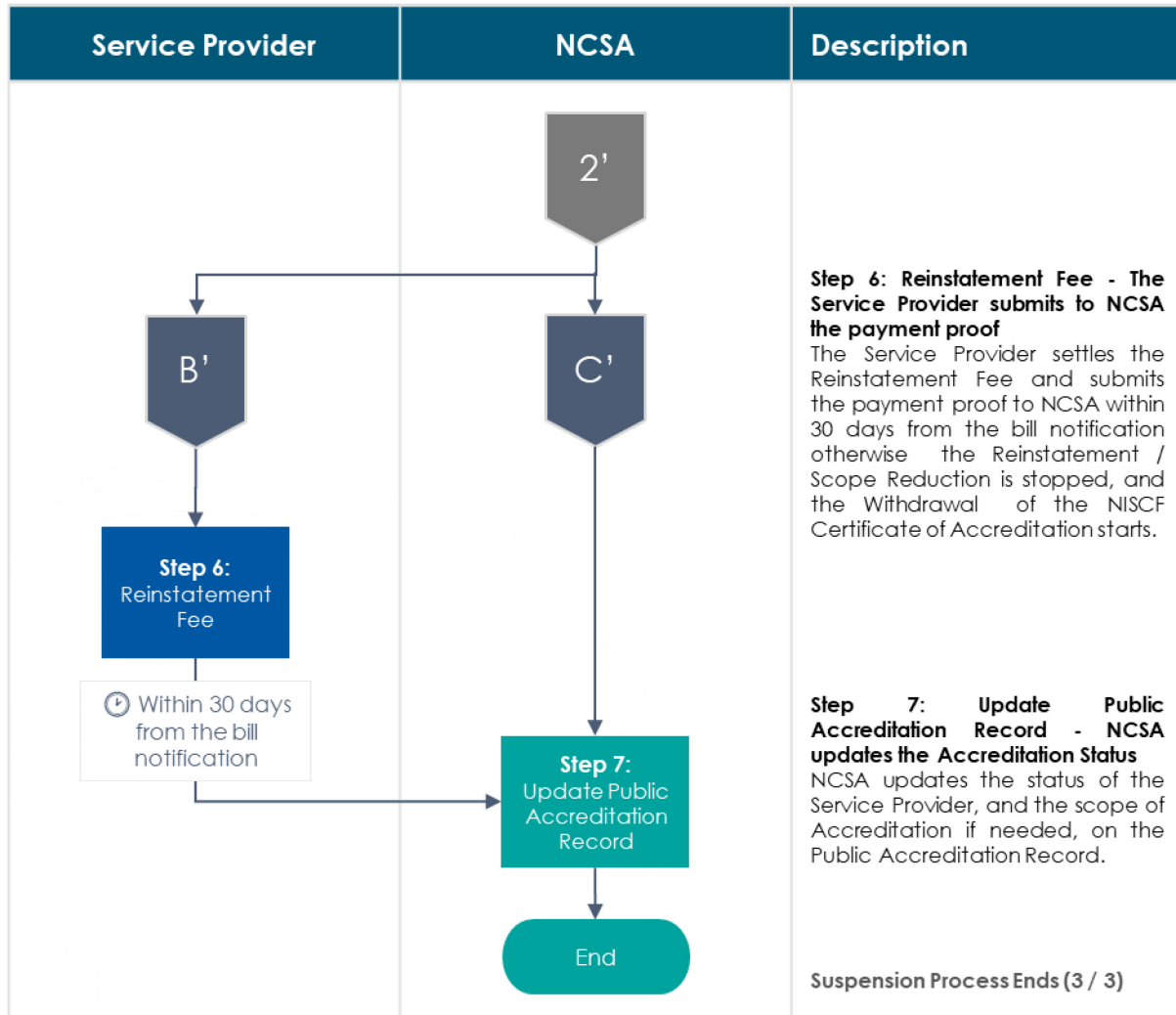


Figure 4: Suspension Process

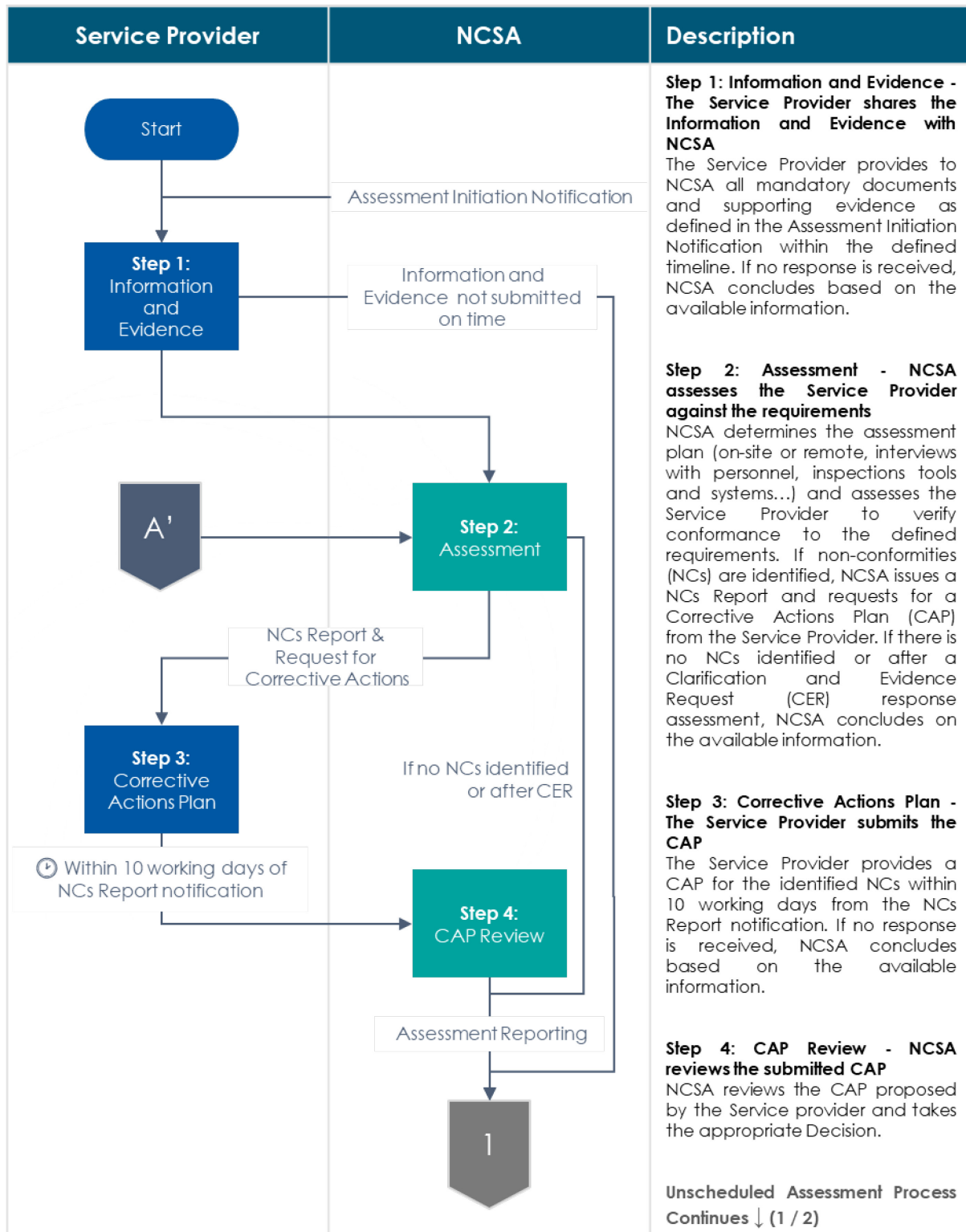


4.2.4. *Unscheduled Assessment*

The Unscheduled Assessment process defines the steps that need to be followed by a Service Provider and the actions that NCSA will take during unplanned or exceptional situations during the Accreditation lifecycle (e.g., Requests for Scope Expansion, Changes affecting the Accreditation, Complaints investigations...).

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in sections 4.2.3.4, 4.2.3.5 and 4.2.3.7 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below [Figure 5: Unscheduled Assessment Process](#) dissects the main actions to be taken during the Unscheduled Assessment process.



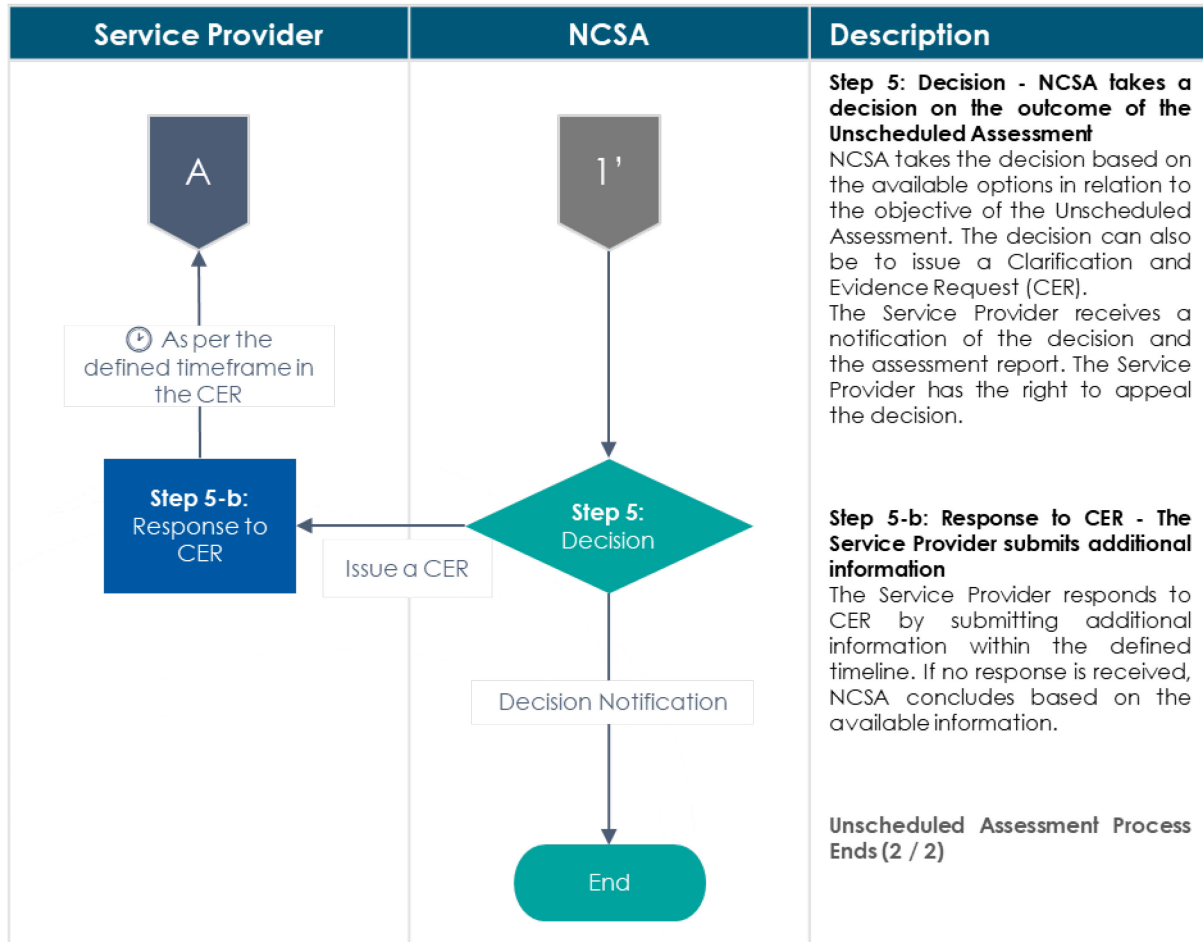


Figure 5: Unscheduled Assessment Process



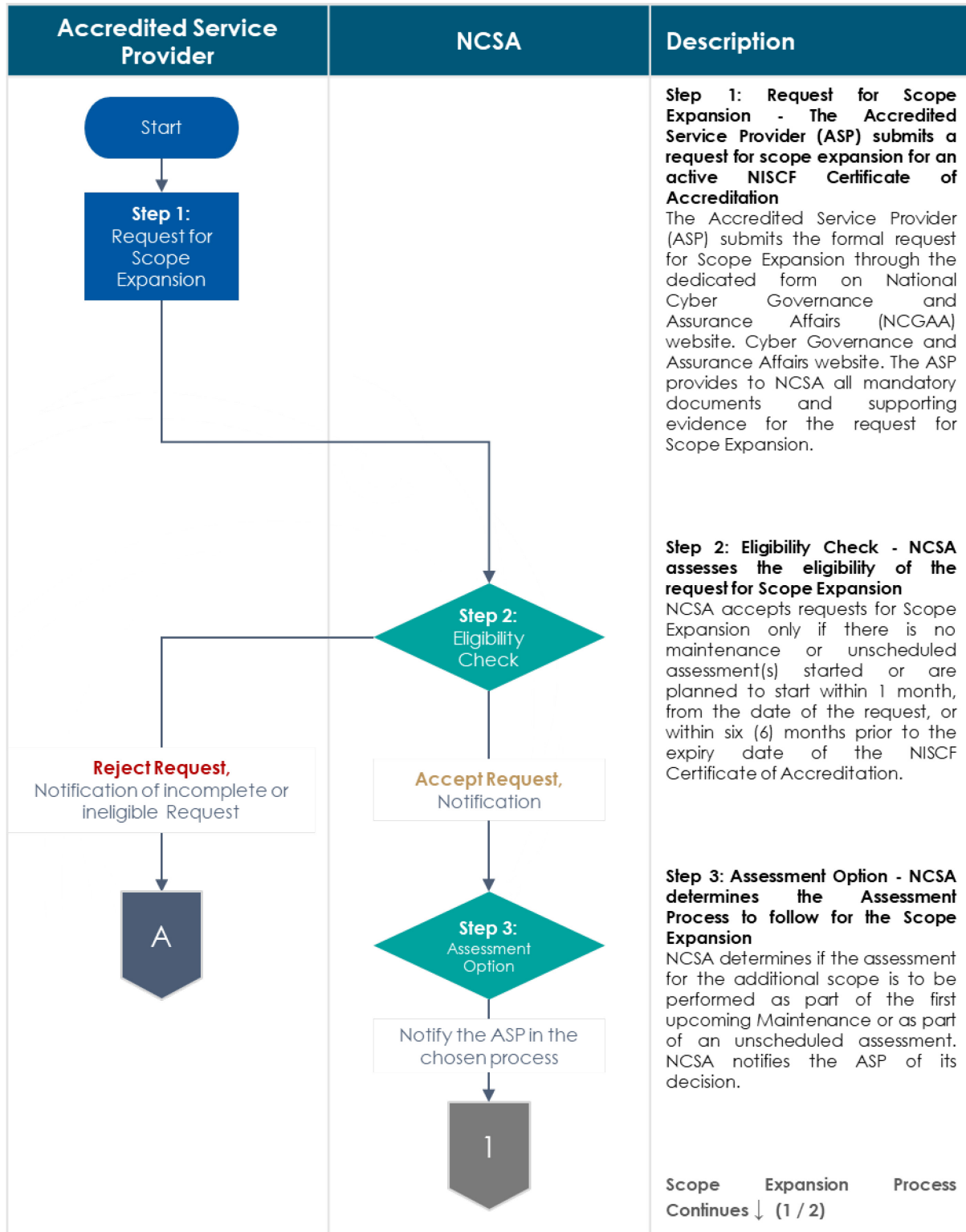
4.2.5. Scope expansion

The Scope Expansion process defines the steps that need to be followed by an Accredited Service Provider and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for Scope Expansion for an active NISCF's Certificate of Accreditation.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.3.7 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below [Figure 6: Scope Expansion Process](#) dissects the main actions to be taken during the Scope Expansion process.





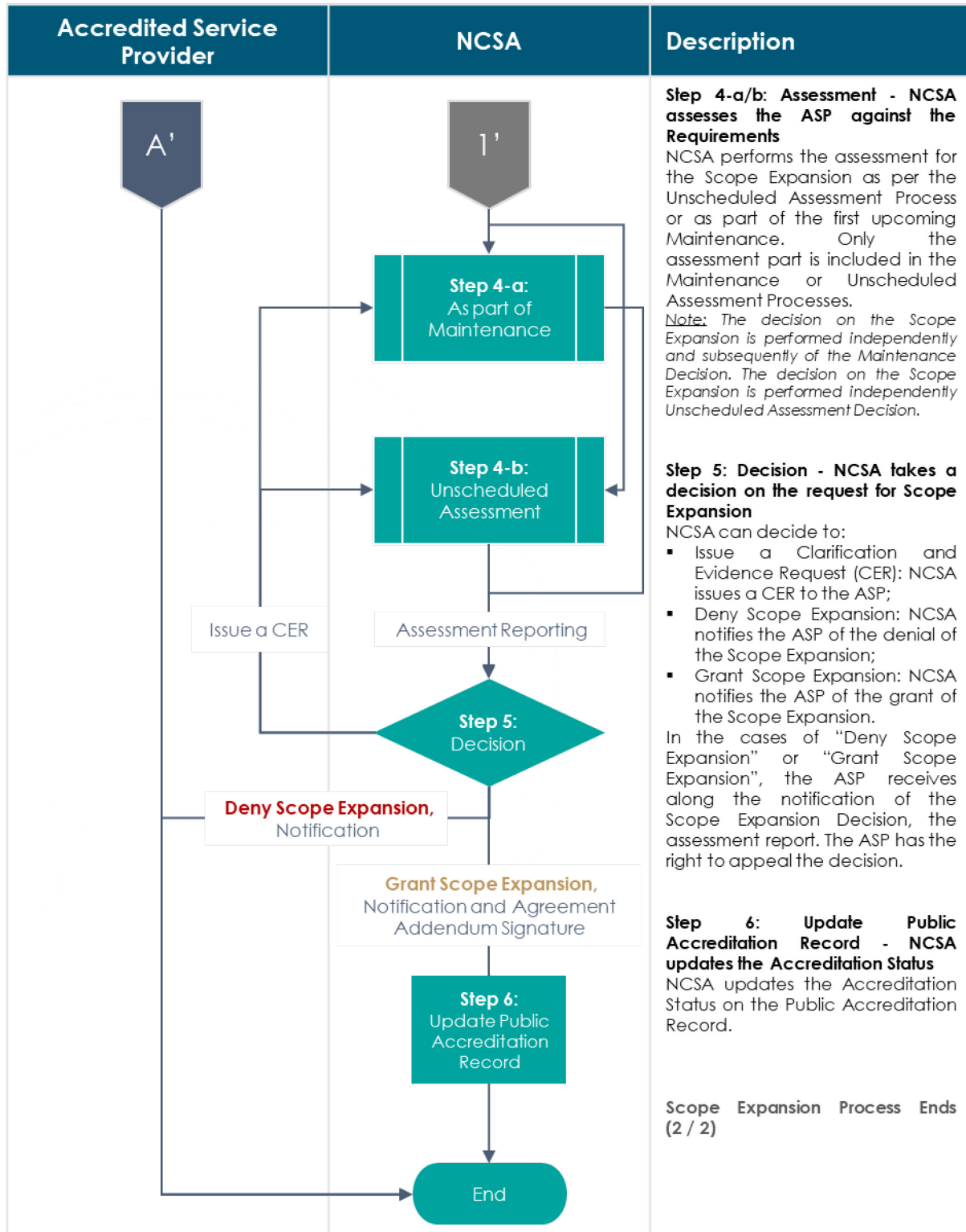


Figure 6: Scope Expansion Process

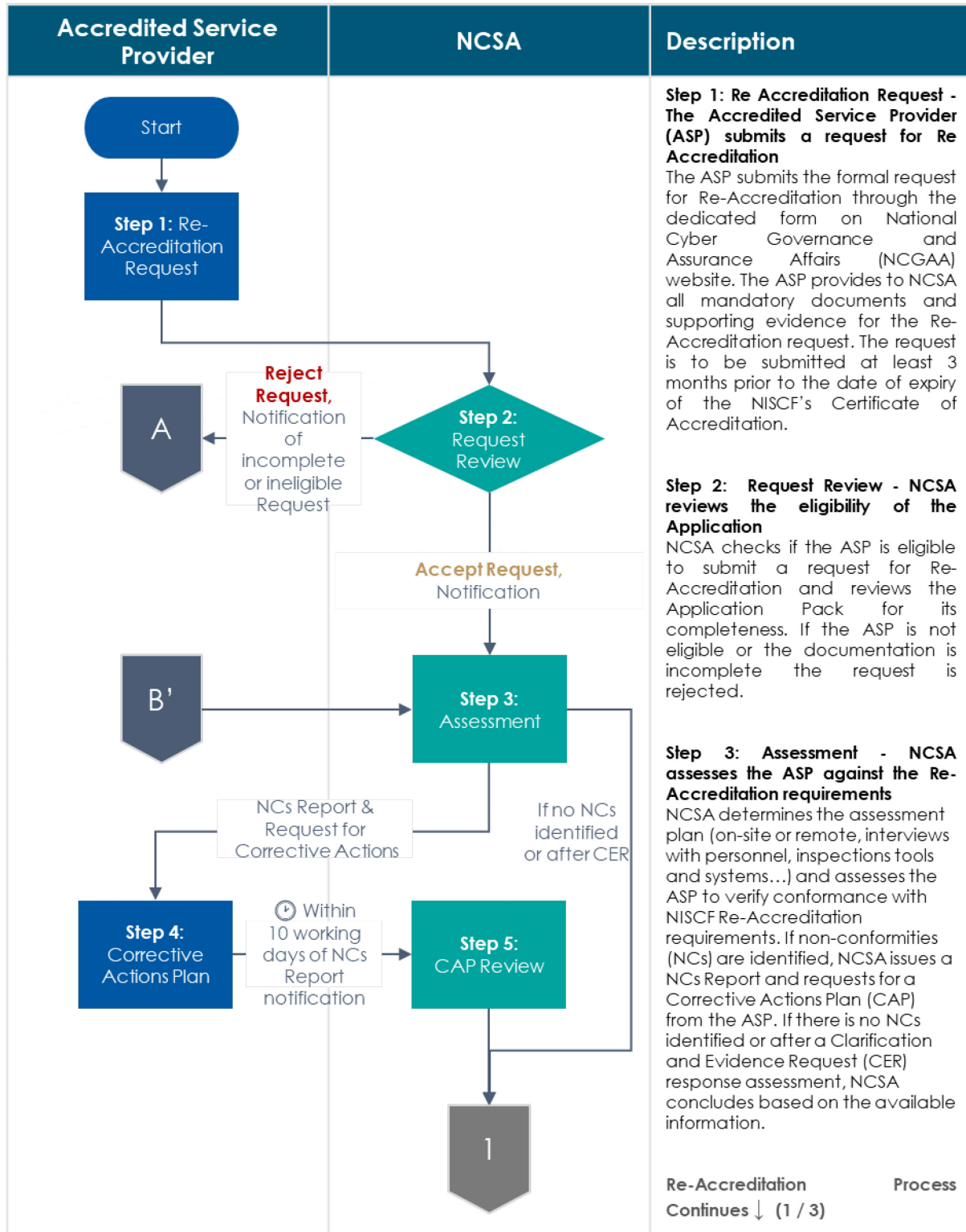


4.2.6. Re-Accreditation

The Re-Accreditation process defines the steps that need to be followed by an Accredited Service Provider and the actions that NCSA will take during a request for extending the period of validity of a NISCF's Certificate of Accreditation through Re-Accreditation.

This process shall be read in conjunction with the relevant NISCF Accreditation Services Agreement, the Accreditation Terms and Conditions and the requirements defined in section 4.2.4 of NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public).

The below dissects the main actions to be taken during the Re-Accreditation process.





Accredited Service Provider	NCSA	Description
<pre> graph TD 1[1'] --> AR[Assessment Reporting] AR --> S6{Step 6: Decision} S6 --> CER[Issue a CER] CER --> S6b[Step 6-b: Response to CER] S6b --> B[B] B --> S6 S6 --> Grant[Grant Re-Accreditation, Notification and Billing of Re-Accreditation Award Fee and Agreement Addendum Signature] S6 --> Deny[Deny Re-Accreditation, Notification] Grant --> C[C] Deny --> D[D] C --> 2[2] D --> 2 </pre> <p>Step 4: Corrective Actions Plan - The ASP submits the CAP The ASP provides a CAP for the identified NCs within the 10 working days from the NCs Report notification. If no response is received, NCSA concludes based on the available information.</p> <p>Step 5: CAP Review - NCSA reviews the submitted CAP NCSA reviews the CAP proposed by the ASP and takes the Re-Accreditation Decision.</p> <p>Step 6: Decision - NCSA takes a decision on the request for Re-Accreditation NCSA can decide to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a Clarification and Evidence Request (CER): NCSA issues a CER to the ASP; Extend the assessment timeline: When the expiry date of the Accreditation was reached and the assessment is not completed, NCSA notifies the ASP of the timeline extension to complete the Re-Accreditation; Deny Re-Accreditation: NCSA notifies the ASP of the denial of Re-Accreditation; Grant Re-Accreditation: NCSA notifies the Applicant of the grant of Accreditation and bills the ASP for the Re-Accreditation Award Fee. <p>In the cases of "Deny" or "Grant", the ASP receives along the notification of the Re-Accreditation Decision, the assessment report. The ASP has the right to appeal the decision.</p> <p><i>Note: The decision to extend the assessment timeline is used in exceptional cases, and at the sole discretion of the NCSAB. In this case and until the Re-Accreditation is granted, the Accreditation status is expired.</i></p> <p>Re-Accreditation Process Continues ↓ (2 / 3)</p>		

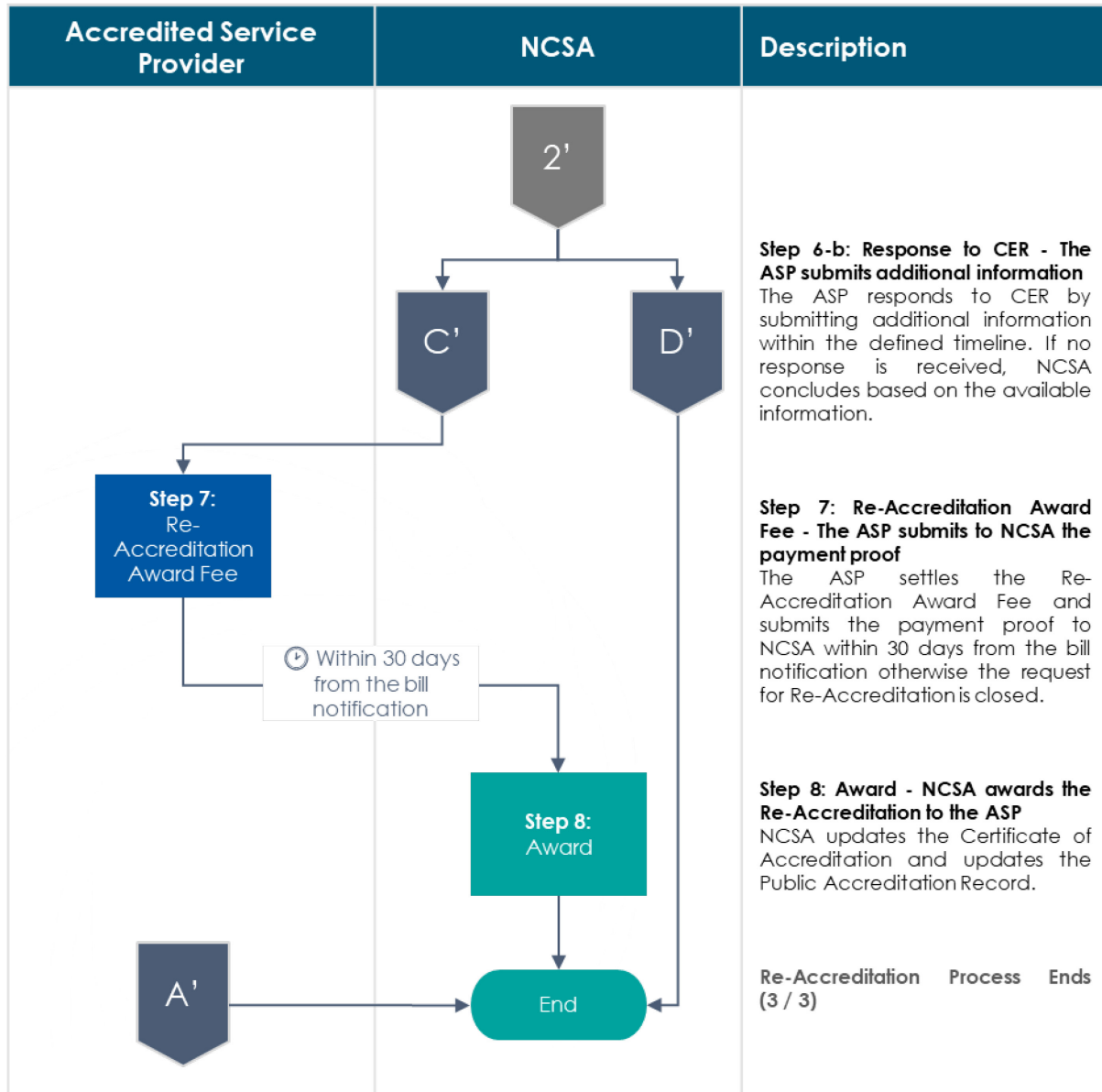


Figure 7: Re-Accreditation Process



4.3. Complaint and Appeal

4.3.1. Complaint

Complaints related to NISCF's Accreditation 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 Accreditation 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 NISCF Accreditation Services 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

NCSA announces through its website or National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs (NCGAA) website which NISCF's Services this Processes Document applies for and from which date. The transition will be handled as per the requirements defined in section **Error! Reference source not found.** of the NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation – 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 Accreditation Services.

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 Accreditation Services requests and / or suspend or withdraw Certificates of Accreditation or any other Certificates, Credentials or Licenses provided by NCSA



from NISCF Accreditation Services stakeholders that do not conform with the steps and actions defined in this process document.



6. Annexes

6.1. Acronyms

ASP	Accredited Service Provider
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
FSA	First Surveillance Assessment
SSA	Second Surveillance Assessment

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-ACCR-GTXD (General Taxonomy Document for National Accreditation - Public)

NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-GPNA (General Policy for National Accreditation - Public)

NCSA-NISCF-ACCR-SNA (Standard for National Accreditation - Public)



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