SDAIA
الهيئة السعودية للبيانات
والذكاء الاصطناعي
Saudi Data & AI Authority

Rules Governing the Licensing to Issue Accreditation Certificates to Controllers and Processors, and the Auditing and Inspection of Personal Data Processing Activities

Document Classification: Public
Version Number 1.0
2026

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Chapter One: Definitions, Scope, and Objectives

Article 1: Definitions

The Terms and Phrases set forth in these Rules shall bear the meanings assigned to them in Article (1) of the Personal Data Protection Law (The Law) issued by Royal Decree No. (M/19), dated 9/2/1443 AH, and its amendments, as well as Article (1) of the Implementing Regulation of the Personal Data Protection Law and Article (1) of the Regulation on Personal Data Transfer Outside the Kingdom (The Regulations). Unless the context requires otherwise, the following terms and expressions, wherever mentioned in these Rules, shall have the meanings expressed herein.

1. **Rules:** The rules governing the licensing of activities for issuing accreditation certificates for Controllers and Processors and for auditing and inspection activities related to the processing of personal data.
2. **License**: A document issued by the Competent Authority granting an Applicant the power to conduct the activities stipulated in Paragraphs (4) and (5) of this Article.
3. **Applicant:** The entity that submits a license application to the Competent Authority to conduct audits or inspections of personal data processing activities or issue accreditation certificates to Controllers and Processors.
4. **License for Issuing Accreditation Certificates:** A document issued by the Competent Authority to a legal person with special capacity authorizing engagement in the activity of issuing accreditation certificates for Controllers and Processors.
5. **License for Auditing and Inspection Activities:** A document issued by the Competent Authority to a legal person with special capacity authorizing engagement in auditing and inspection activities related to personal data processing at Controllers and Processors.
6. **Licensee:** The entity authorized by the Competent Authority to issue accreditation certificates or conduct audits or inspections, pursuant to the Competent Authority's decision on the submitted license applications and in accordance with the requirements specified in these Rules.
7. **Accreditation Certificate:** A certificate issued by the Licensee to Controllers or Processors, confirming that the practices and procedures followed by the Controllers and Processors in processing personal data comply with the provisions of the Law, the Regulations, and the requirements stipulated in the Rules Governing the Issuance of Accreditation Certificates for Controllers and Processors.
8. **Audits or Inspections:** An activity carried out by the Licensee to verify the comprehensiveness of personal data processing activities at the entity by conducting audits and inspections, and to determine the effectiveness of the controls and measures taken to protect personal data.
9. **Audit or Inspection Report:** A report prepared by a Licensee to conduct audits or inspections, outlining the findings of the audit or inspection of the personal data processing activities subject to the audit or inspection pursuant to the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.

10. **Certification Issuance Assessment Report:** A report prepared by the Licensee that includes the results of the evaluation of the practices and procedures in processing personal data pursuant to the provisions of the Law and the Regulations, in accordance with the mechanism and standards set by the Competent Authority.
11. **Competent Authority Platform:** An online platform operated by the Competent Authority to support the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.

Article 2: Scope and Objective

These Rules shall apply to entities that submit license applications to the Competent Authority for the issuance of accreditation certificates or for conducting audits or inspections of personal data processing activities, as provided for in Paragraphs (2) and (3) of Article (33) of the Law, and Articles (35) and (36) of the Law's Implementing Regulation. These Rules aim to:

1. Define the licensing procedure followed by the Competent Authority for entities issuing accreditation certificates or conducting audits or inspections.
2. Approve reliable entities to issue accreditation certificates or to conduct audits or inspections in accordance with the provisions of the Law and the Regulations and in line with the documents issued by the Competent Authority regarding compliance with the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.
3. Promote transparency in the application of the provisions of the Law through the adoption and publication of procedures related to licensing entities to undertake the activities specified in the Law.

Chapter Two: License Requirements

Article 3: General Requirements for Granting a License

The Applicant shall meet the following requirements:

1. The Applicant shall comply with the provisions of the Law, the Regulations, and any other regulatory documents issued by the Competent Authority.
2. The Applicant's practices and procedures for issuing accreditation certificates or conducting audits or inspections shall be carried out in accordance with the mechanism and standards set by the Competent Authority and in compliance with the documents concerning adherence to the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.
3. The Applicant shall disclose any potential conflict of interest that may arise when conducting business under the license with Controllers or Processors, to ensure that these services are provided with full independence.
4. The Applicant shall disclose any previous or existing complaints filed against them pursuant to the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.
5. The Applicant shall disclose any violations of the provisions of the Law and the Regulations previously identified by the Competent Authority.

Article 4: License Requirements

The Applicant shall meet the following requirements:

1. The Applicant shall be a legal entity independent of any other entity under the Kingdom's regulations and shall have an establishment in the Kingdom.
2. The means of communication adopted for the Licensee shall include the entity's legal name, the address of its establishment, and the commercial registration or foreign investor license number.
3. The Applicant shall have the technical tools and qualified personnel necessary to issue accreditation certificates or to conduct audits or inspections in accordance with the provisions of the Law, the Regulations, and the mechanism and standards determined by the Competent Authority.
4. Obtaining accreditation for granting certificates from the Saudi Accreditation Center if the license application is related to issuing accreditation certificates.
5. An applicant for a license to issue accreditation certificates shall have the following:

A. The applicant's capital shall not be less than ten (10) million Saudi riyals.

B. The applicant shall have no fewer than ten (10) evaluation employees, all of whom must be directly employed by the applicant under employment contracts.

C. Some evaluation employees shall have at least five (5) years of experience in personal data protection practices, evaluation work, or any related field, as determined by the Competent Authority.

D. Evaluation employees shall complete specialized courses or pass specialized tests determined and prepared by the Competent Authority.

6. Any other requirements determined by the Competent Authority, in accordance with the provisions of the Law, the Regulations, and any document issued by the Competent Authority regarding the application of the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.
7. The Competent Authority may, at its discretion and based on the circumstances, exempt the applicant from any of the above requirements.

Chapter Three: Licensing Procedures

Article 5: Submitting a License Application

A license application shall be submitted by the Applicant in accordance with the procedures specified by the Competent Authority. The application shall include the following details:

1. Complete the licensing application form and specify the type of license required (license to issue accreditation certificates or to conduct audits or inspections).
2. Submit the entity's articles of association, commercial registration, address, and official contact details.
3. Submit a copy of the supporting documents for the requirements specified in Articles (3) and (4) of these Rules.

4. Any other requirements specified by the Competent Authority, in accordance with the provisions of the Law and the Regulations, and consistent with the standards of compliance with the provisions of the Law and the Regulations.

Article 6: License Application Evaluation

1. The Competent Authority shall evaluate the license application in accordance with the requirements and conditions set forth in Articles (3) and (4) of these Rules. The application shall be reviewed, and a decision shall be issued within a maximum period of ninety (90) business days from the date of its receipt. The Applicant shall be notified of the decision.
2. In the event of acceptance of the application, the Competent Authority shall determine the duration of the license in accordance with the provisions of Article (8) of these Rules.

Article 7: Fees for Services

1. The Competent Authority shall determine the financial fee for the licenses stipulated in Paragraphs (4) and (5) of Article (1) of these Rules.
2. The Competent Authority may establish categories for licenses and determine a financial fee for each category.

Chapter Four: Term of License, Provisions Related to Renewal, Suspension, Revocation, and Cancellation

Article 8: Term of License

The Competent Authority shall grant the license for a period of three (3) years commencing from the date the license decision is issued.

Article 9: Renewal

Licensees shall submit a renewal application to the Competent Authority at least ninety (90) business days prior to the expiration date. Renewal shall be approved upon verification of the fulfillment of the license requirements and conditions stipulated in Articles (3) and (4). The term of the renewed license shall be the same as the initial term or as determined by the Competent Authority.

Article 10: License Suspension and Revocation

1. The Competent Authority may revoke the license or temporarily suspend the licensee's activities, in accordance with the mechanism determined by the Competent Authority, in the following cases:
   A. Failure of the Licensee to comply with the requirements stipulated in Articles (3) and (4) of these Rules, or violation of the provisions of the Law and the Regulations, or any binding instructions issued by the Competent Authority in this regard.
   B. Termination of the accreditation stipulated in Paragraph (4) of Article (4) of these Rules if the license type is a license to issue accreditation certificates.

   C. Failure of the Licensee to address violations or any written directives issued by the Competent Authority.
   D. If it is proven that the Licensee provided false information or failed to disclose any information that it was required to disclose during the application process or while conducting the licensed activity.
   E. Any other reasons deemed appropriate by the Competent Authority.
2. The Competent Authority shall notify the entity whose license has been revoked or temporarily suspended of the reasons for such revocation or suspension.
3. The entity may appeal the revocation or temporary suspension of the license within a period not exceeding (30) business days from the date of notification of the decision, or may rectify its status and submit proof of such rectification if the revocation or suspension of the license was based on any of the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Article.
4. The revocation or temporary suspension of the license shall not affect the validity of audit or inspection reports or accreditation certificates issued by the Licensee prior to the date of revocation or suspension unless the Competent Authority finds that such work is unsound or incorrect.

Article 11: License Cancellation

1. The license issued pursuant to these Rules shall be canceled in any of the following cases:
   A. The dissolution of the legal entity of the Licensee, in accordance with the Companies Law.
   B. Failure to obtain the approval of the Competent Authority prior to commencing acquisition or merger procedures with another Licensee.
2. The cancellation of the license shall not affect the validity of audit or inspection reports or accreditation certificates issued by the Licensee prior to the date of cancellation unless the Competent Authority finds that such work is unsound or incorrect.

Article 12: Subcontracting

1. An entity licensed to conduct accreditation activities under these Rules may not subcontract any entity to perform the tasks assigned under the license except with the prior approval of the Competent Authority, and only if the subcontracted entity is licensed under these Rules.
2. An entity licensed to conduct audit and inspection activities under these Rules may not subcontract any entity to perform the tasks assigned under the license except with the prior approval of the Competent Authority, and only if the subcontracted entity is licensed under these Rules.
3. The subcontracting by a Licensee of any of the work it undertakes pursuant to the license shall not relieve it of its obligations under these Rules or its liability to the Competent Authority.

Article 13: General Obligations of the Licensee

1. The Licensee shall continuously train and develop its personnel involved in personal data protection in accordance with the provisions of the Law and the Regulations, and support them in obtaining professional certifications in this field to ensure the enhancement of their competence.

2. The Licensee shall monitor and comply with any regulations, instructions, or similar publications related to personal data protection issued by the Competent Authority.
3. The Licensee shall conduct a semi-annual assessment of the administrative, technical, regulatory, and operational measures and procedures related to the issuance of accreditation certificates or the conduct of audit or inspection activities, to ensure the continued fulfillment of the license conditions and requirements specified in Articles (3) and (4) of these Rules, in accordance with the mechanism and standards set by the Competent Authority.
4. The Licensee shall maintain the confidentiality of the findings related to the issuance of accreditation certificates or the conduct of audit or inspection activities concerning assessed entities, and shall not publish, share, or disclose such findings without the prior written approval of the Competent Authority.
5. The Licensee shall disclose any material change after obtaining the license that may result in a conflict of interest with any Controller or Processor when performing its duties under the license.
6. The Licensee authorized to issue accreditation certificates shall prepare a plan and procedures for the periodic review of the work of entities that have been issued accreditation certificates.
7. Obtain the approval of the Competent Authority when the Licensee wishes to acquire or merge with another Licensee.
8. Data related to the conduct of these activities shall be retained and stored within the Kingdom.

Article 14: Obligations of Licensees Issuing Accreditation Certificates

1. The licensed entity shall submit a report on the evaluation of the issuance of accreditation certificates, including the fees for providing such services, in accordance with the mechanism and standards set by the Competent Authority.
2. The Licensee shall maintain complete, up-to-date, and auditable documentation, in accordance with the mechanism set by the Competent Authority, including the following:
   A. All accreditation applications received from Controllers and Processors.
   B. All assessments of accreditation applications.
   C. All issued accreditation certificates, including details of the entity to which the certificate was issued, the date of issuance, the expiration date, and all related documents.
   D. All decisions, justifications, and supporting evidence related to the revocation or renewal of accreditation certificates.
   E. Details of all relevant Licensee personnel who participate in assessing the suitability of a Controller or Processor for accreditation or who make decisions regarding the issuance, revocation, or renewal of accreditation certificates.
3. The Licensee shall submit periodic reports to the Competent Authority regarding entities whose accreditation certificates have been granted, revoked, or renewed, including the reasons for such actions.

Chapter Five: General Provisions

Article 15: Supervision and Follow-up

The Competent Authority, for the purpose of supervising the Licensee and monitoring its activities, may take the following actions:

1. Take all necessary measures to verify the accuracy of the data submitted and the reports prepared by the Licensee.
2. Request any documents related to the Licensee and its activities during the validity period of the license.
3. Coordinate and follow up with relevant entities.
4. Perform supervisory functions to ensure the implementation of the provisions of these Rules.

Article 16: Publication

The Competent Authority shall publish on its platform a list of entities licensed to issue accreditation certificates and entities licensed to conduct audits or inspections, including the validity periods of the licenses and the official contact information for each Licensee.

Article 17: Review and Amendment

The Competent Authority may, when deemed necessary, review these Rules and make any amendments or updates thereto.

Article 18: Additional Instructions

The Competent Authority may issue any additional instructions derived from these Rules.

Article 19: Entry into Force

These Rules shall enter into force from the date of their publication on the official website of the Competent Authority.

SDAIA
الهيئة السعودية للبيانات والذكاء الاصطناعي
Saudi Data & AI Authority