

International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF)



IAF Policy Document

Policies and Procedures for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA

Issue 2

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited bodies are competent to carry out the work they undertake. Accreditation bodies which are members of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) are required to operate at the highest standard and to require the bodies they accredit to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF documents to the application of those standards.

Accreditations granted by accreditation body signatories of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), based on regular surveillance, allows companies with an accredited conformity assessment certificate or report in one part of the world to have that certificate or report recognised everywhere else in the world.

Therefore certificates or reports in the fields of management systems, products (including services and processes), persons and other similar programs of conformity assessment issued by bodies accredited by signatories of the IAF MLA are reliable in international trade.

This policy and procedure document contains IAF's policies and procedures for the IAF MLA coverage, including the IAF's position in regard to working with sector schemes owned by End-User Groups.

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IAF Policies and Procedures for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA

1. Introduction

1.1. IAF operates the IAF MLA for accreditation against ISO/IEC 17011 with main scopes covering different accreditation activities based on international standards for conformity assessment bodies (e.g. ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17024 and ISO/IEC Guide 65) as endorsed by IAF and associated IAF application documents to the standards. The IAF MLA for the main scope is a framework MLA and covers all conformity assessment schemes accredited by the IAF MLA signatories. Membership of the IAF MLA for a main scope provides confidence that CABs accredited by the IAF MLA signatories under that main scope are equally reliable in the outcomes of conformity assessment activities.

Note: The scopes of the IAF MLA for the accreditation of certification bodies of persons based on ISO/IEC 17024 will be operational in the future.

1.2. A main scope of the IAF MLA may specifically define a sub-scope(s) which is(are) a conformity assessment scheme(s) (e.g. for specific product, management system, inspection and/or persons) based on relevant standards or normative documents as endorsed by IAF and associated IAF application documents, as appropriate. The membership of the IAF MLA for a sub-scope further provides confidence that the outcomes of the specific conformity assessment scheme (e.g. ISO 9001 QMS, ISO 14001 EMS etc) operated by CABs accredited by the IAF MLA signatories under that sub-scope are equivalent.

1.3. The standards or normative documents as endorsed by IAF for the main scopes and sub-scopes of the IAF MLA are included in the list of IAF Endorsed Normative Documents, which can be found in IAF PR 4 *.

*Available on the IAF Website at www.iaf.nu under Publications, Procedures Documents

2. General Policy for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA

2.1. The general criteria for evaluating suitability for inclusion of a standard or other normative documents under the IAF MLA for main scope and/or sub-scope includes

- i) Significant relevance to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies under the scope of the IAF activities;
- ii) Sufficient substance to enhance the recognition of professional competence;
- iii) Fulfils appropriate needs on an international basis;
- iv) Lack of inclusion poses threats to IAF leadership in accreditation;
- v) Complementary to or supportive of any of the other standards being currently used;

- vi) Does not dilute the substance of any existing standard under the IAF MLA;
- vii) Document must be produced by an international consensus process.

2.2. A precondition for IAF expanding the IAF MLA into a new main scope shall be that an international standard for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies has been developed and published which contains requirements applicable to the types of conformity assessment bodies other than those covered by the existing main scopes.

3. Specific Procedure for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA based on Publicly Owned Normative Documents

3.1 The evaluation of suitability for inclusion of publicly owned standards/normative documents in the IAF MLA will be initiated when the Technical Committee creates a new working project proposed by any member of IAF and related to a specific scheme based on publicly owned standards/normative documents which have not been endorsed as scope of the IAF MLA. The evaluation of the suitability to demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria as described in Clauses 2.1 and 2.2 shall be part of the task of a new project. The new project shall be approved by the Executive Committee.

3.2 A recommendation for expanding the IAF MLA to include a main scope and/or sub-scope shall be submitted to the Executive Committee by the Technical Committee based on the outcome of the evaluation from the above working project. The recommendation shall contain sufficient descriptive information which demonstrates that the criteria as described in Clauses 2.1 and 2.2 are fulfilled.

(Refer to Section 1 of Annex 1 for the information to be provided in the recommendation.)

3.3 Upon the endorsement by the Executive Committee of the recommendation, the Technical Committee shall study the need for the development of specific IAF application documents and the MLA Committee shall be responsible for the analysis of the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation based on the outputs of the Technical Committee for the proposed new scope.

(Refer to Section 2 of Annex 1 for the information to be provided.)

3.4 A Proposal for expanding the IAF MLA to cover further main scope and/or sub-scope shall be put forward to the General Assembly by the Executive Committee based on the recommendation of the Technical Committee and MLA Committee.

(Refer to Annex 1 for the information to be provided in the proposal.)

3.5 The decision to include an additional main scope and/or sub-scope in the IAF MLA shall be made by the IAF General Assembly. Following the development of any specific IAF application documents and additional preparation of peer evaluation, the newly endorsed standards or normative documents for the main scope and/or sub-scope shall be added to the list of IAF Endorsed Normative Documents, which can be found in IAF PR 4.

4. Specific Policy and Procedure for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA based on Privately Owned Sector Schemes

4.1. Specific Policy for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA based on Privately Owned Sector Schemes

4.1.1 IAF welcomes the opportunity to recognize End-User Groups which demonstrate that they represent substantial parts of the designated end-user sector. IAF also welcomes discussions with recognized End-User Groups wishing to operate third party sector schemes regarding means by which IAF accreditation body members may contribute their expertise and the value of the IAF world-wide recognition program to meet the End-User Groups' needs.

4.1.2 IAF is interested in working with any recognized End-User Group which wishes to operate a third party sector scheme provided that the criteria as described in Clauses 2.1 and 2.2 are fulfilled and additionally the sector scheme –

- i) is based upon a publicly available normative document(s) (e.g. for product, management system, inspection and/or persons) which has (have) been developed and will be reviewed and updated as required at appropriate intervals in an open and transparent manner, through a consensus process involving participation by interested parties, and is(are) set out preferably in separate normative documents from the conformity assessment requirements, in order to assist transparency, non-discrimination and open competition among conformity assessment bodies;
- ii) has demonstrable clear international market support;
- iii) is operated and administered in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of conformity assessment bodies or accreditation bodies other than relevant technical considerations;
- iv) is based on the international standards for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies without any requirements which either contradict or exclude any of the requirements of the relevant accreditation standard;
- v) will make effective use of the expertise of IAF MLA signatories and the value of the IAF world wide MLA;
- vi) will use IAF application documents, with specific requirements for accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies which are prepared by IAF in co-operation with the End-User Group, where such documents are required;

- vii) will involve accreditation bodies which are signatories of the IAF MLA in the management of the scheme, and
- viii) agrees to make all normative documents relevant to its sector scheme available at a fair and reasonable cost for Members of IAF and their applicants/accredited bodies to adopt into their accreditation/conformity assessment programs.

4.1.3 From time to time IAF may develop supplementary policies in the application of the policy as described in Clause 4.1.2.

4.2. Specific Procedure for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA based on Privately Owned Sector Schemes

4.2.1 An application for a specific agreement with IAF shall be submitted to the IAF Secretary by the End-User Group, covering the proposed scheme. The application shall comprehensively explain the scope of the proposed scheme, any specific requirements, the interaction/ responsibilities to be assigned between the End-User Group and IAF and how the scheme complies with the IAF policy for endorsement of privately owned normative documents (itemized in Clause 4.1).

(Refer to Annex 2 for policy declarations, objective evidence and information on specific requirements to be provided in the application.)

4.2.2 The Executive Committee will appoint a Task Group consisting of the appointed IAF liaison sector representative, the End-User Group contact person, as well as the Chair of the MLA Committee, Chair of the Technical Committee and Chair of the User Advisory Committee or their nominees and other persons as necessary, to review “Information covered in End-User Group Applications for Sector Schemes” with conclusion on the compliance with the specific requirements as described in Clauses 4.1 and 4.2.3 as well as the general criteria as described in Clause 2.1 and 2.2, for consideration by the Executive Committee.

(Refer to Annex 2 for comment on the compliance with the specific requirements as described in Clauses 4.1 and 4.2.3 and Section 1 of Annex 1 for the information to be provided for the conclusion on the compliance with the general criteria as described in Clause 2.1 and 2.2.)

4.2.3 An agreement with an End-User Group for a sector scheme will only be established if, in the opinion of the IAF Executive Committee, an application submitted by the End-User Group confirms that:

- i) the End-User Group’s proposed scheme meets the IAF policy for expansion of the scope of the IAF MLA based on privately owned sector schemes as set out in Clause 4.1 and it is clearly understood and accepted as to what IAF can and cannot provide;

- ii) the End-User Group agrees to contribute to the development and preparation of any requirements specific to its scheme in order to meet the End-User Group's particular needs (if such specific requirements are needed);
- iii) the End-User Group agrees to appoint a liaison person to IAF for their scheme.

Note: In order to ensure active participation in the sector scheme and cooperation by IAF Members, it is understood that the End-User Group would also have initiated an application for IAF membership.

4.2.4 The following actions shall be taken prior to granting of the Sector Scheme Agreement to the End-User Group:

- i) the Executive Committee will confirm that the person nominated as the representative of the End-User Group is correctly identified and that contact details are correct.
- ii) the Task Group appointed by the Executive Committee will develop an implementation plan/work program for the new sector scheme. This plan will include identification of the needs and expectations of the sector scheme that can currently be met, and those needs and expectations that will require further scheme development.
- iii) the Task Group will prepare and agree on any requirements of the MLA specific to the sector scheme. This will be documented as an additional agreement specific to an individual sector scheme following the procedures outlined in the "General Procedures for the Organization of IAF Committees and Subordinate Groups and for the Development of IAF Documents" (IAF PR 2)*.
*Available on the IAF Website at www.iaf.nu under Publications, Procedures Documents
- iv) the Task Group will forward a new scheme implementation plan and additional agreement to the IAF Executive Committee for endorsement and subsequent ballot to all IAF members.
- v) should IAF members approve the new program, IAF will incorporate the sector scheme into the MLA as a sub-scope by including the sector scheme in the list of IAF Endorsed Normative Documents, which can be found in IAF PR 4.

4.2.5 Following granting of the Sector Scheme Agreement to the End-User Group, the Executive Committee or its Task Group will meet with the representatives of each sector scheme as appropriate for a management review of the arrangements for the sector scheme. The representatives of the sector scheme will be invited to witness the relevant accreditation assessment and/or peer evaluation processes if it is defined in the relevant agreement between the End-User Group and IAF for the sector scheme.

Annex 1

Proposal for inclusion of standards/normative documents in the IAF MLA

General description/explanation of the proposed standards/normative documents (including the scope of the MLA for the standards/normative documents):

IAF Requirement	Relevant PL 3 Clause	Descriptive information of how requirement is met or to be met*
1. General Criteria		
a) Significant relevance to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies under the scope of the IAF activities.	Clause 2.1 (i)	
b) Sufficient substance to enhance the recognition of professional competence.	Clause 2.1 (ii)	
c) Fulfils appropriate needs on an international basis.	Clause 2.1 (iii)	
d) Lack of inclusion poses threats to IAF leadership in accreditation.	Clause 2.1 (iv)	
e) Complementary to or supportive of any of the other standards being currently used.	Clause 2.1 (v)	
f) Does not dilute the substance of any existing standard under the MLA.	Clause 2.1 (vi)	
g) Document must be produced by an international consensus process.	Clause 2.1 (vii)	
h) A precondition for IAF expanding the IAF MLA into a new main scope shall be met, i.e. an international standard for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies has been developed and published which contains requirements applicable to	Clause 2.2 (Applicable for main scope only)	

the types of conformity assessment bodies other than those covered by the existing main scopes.		
2. Further Actions Required		Plan**
a) Need for the development of specific IAF application documents for inclusion of publicly owned standards/normative documents in the MLA.	Clause 3.3	
b) Need for additional preparation of peer evaluation.	Clause 3.3	

* Sufficient descriptive information as how the IAF requirement is met, or will be met by the publicly owned normative documents for inclusion in the MLA, is provided by the Technical Committee as per Clause 3.2. For the privately owned sector schemes, the information is provided by the Task Group appointed by the Executive Committee as per Clause 4.2.2.

** The need for the development of specific IAF application documents for inclusion of publicly owned standards/normative documents in the MLA is proposed by the Technical Committee and the need for additional preparation of peer evaluation by the MLA Committee as per Clause 3.3.

Annex 2**Information covered in End-User Group Applications for Sector Schemes**

General description/explanation of the proposed sector scheme (please provide information on its scope, any specific requirements for the relevant scope of the MLA, the interaction/responsibilities to be assigned between the End-User Group and IAF and any other information relevant to the scheme's operation):

IAF Requirement	Relevant PL 3 Clause	Results	Comment**
1. Objective Evidence		Explanation/evidence of how requirement is met or to be met*	
a) Evidence of the End-User Group representing a substantial part of the affected sector and market impact of the sector scheme.	Clause 4.1.1		
b) Evidence that normative document(s) of the sector scheme (e.g. for specific product, management system, inspection and/or persons) has(have) been developed and will be reviewed and updated as required at appropriate intervals in an open and transparent manner, through a consensus process involving participation by interested parties and is publicly available.	Clause 4.1.2 (i)		
c) Evidence that the sector scheme has clear international market support.	Clause 4.1.2 (ii)		
d) Evidence of operating and administering in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent	Clause 4.1.2 (iii)		

manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or limitation on the acceptance of conformity assessment bodies or accreditation bodies other than relevant technical considerations.			
e) Evidence that the sector scheme is based on the international standards for accreditation of conformity assessment bodies without any requirements which either contradict or exclude any of the requirements of the relevant accreditation standard.	Clause 4.1.2 (iv)		
2. Policy Declarations		End-User Group to declare how the IAF Policy requirements will be met	
a) Intends to make effective use of the expertise of IAF MLA signatories and the value of the IAF world-wide MLA.	Clause 4.1.2 (v)		
b) Intends to use IAF application documents, with specific requirements for accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies which are prepared by IAF in co-operation with the End-User Group, where such documents are required.	Clause 4.1.2 (vi)		
c) Intends to involve the accreditation bodies which are signatories of the IAF MLA in the management of the scheme.	Clause 4.1.2 (vii)		
d) Agrees to make all normative documents relevant	Clause 4.1.2 (viii)		

to its sector scheme available at a fair and reasonable cost for Members of IAF and their applicants/accredited bodies to adopt into their accreditation/conformity assessment programs.			
e) Understands what IAF can and can not provide	Clause 4.2.3 (i)		
f) Agrees to contribute to the development of specific requirements for accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies for the sector scheme if needed.	Clause 4.2.3 (ii)		
3. Specific Requirements		Information to be provided by End-User Group	
a) Specific requirements for accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies prescribed by the sector scheme (if any).	Clause 4.2.3 (ii)		
b) Need for IAF to develop specific requirements for accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies for the sector scheme.	Clause 4.2.3 (ii)		
c) End-User Group liaison representative's name and contact details.	Clause 4.2.3 (iii)		

*Information and/or documented evidence as to how the IAF requirements are met, or will be met by the sector scheme, are to be submitted to the IAF Secretary by the End-User Group.

**Comment is filled in by the Task Group appointed by the Executive Committee as per Clause 4.2.2.

End of IAF Policies and Procedures for Expansion of the scope of the IAF MLA.