IAF MLA Document

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS

Issue 6

(IAF ML 4:2012)

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Issue 6

Page | 2

The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) details criteria for the accreditation of bodies that provide conformity assessment services, and such accreditation facilitates trade and reduces demands for multiple conformity assessment activities.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring that accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. Accreditation Bodies (ABs) that are members of IAF and the CABs they accredit are required to comply with appropriate international standards and the applicable IAF application documents for the consistent application of those standards.

ABs that are signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are evaluated regularly by an appointed team of peers to provide confidence in the operation of their accreditation programs. The structure and scope of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PR 4 - Structure of IAF MLA and Endorsed Normative Documents.

The IAF MLA is structured in five levels: Level 1 specifies mandatory criteria that apply to all ABs, ISO/IEC 17011. The combination of a Level 2 activity(ies) and the corresponding Level 3 normative document(s) is called the main scope of the MLA, and the combination of Level 4 (if applicable) and Level 5 relevant normative documents is called a sub-scope of the MLA.

- Main scope of the MLA includes activities e.g. product certification and associated mandatory documents e.g. ISO/IEC Guide 65. The attestations made by CABs at the main scope level are considered to be equally reliable.
- Sub scope of the MLA includes conformity assessment requirements e.g. ISO 9001 and scheme specific requirements, where applicable, e.g. ISO TS 22003. The attestations made by CABs at the sub scope level are considered to be equivalent.

The IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of conformity assessment outcomes. An attestation issued, within the scope of the IAF MLA, by a body that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide, thereby facilitating international trade.

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Issue 6

Page | 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 4

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS

PART 0   INTRODUCTION

0.1.   Scope

0.1.1.   This document defines the policies and procedures that the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) will use to maintain and extend a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) among both Accreditation Body (AB) Members and Regional Groups which operate a Regional MLA, called hereinafter Regional MLA's. It also provides a model form for signature by individual Accreditation Bodies and Regional Groups when they join the MLA.

0.1.2   This document relies heavily on IAF/ILAC A1 and IAF/ILAC A2 and will not repeat information contained in those documents.

0.2   References

0.2.1   IAF/ILAC A1 – IAF/ILAC Multi-lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group

0.2.2   IAF/ILAC A2 – IAF/ILAC Multi-lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body

0.2.3   IAF PL 3 – Policy and Procedure for Expansion of the Scope of the MLA

0.2.4   IAF PR 4 – Structure of the IAF MLA and list of IAF Endorsed Normative Documents

0.2.5   IAF PL 2 – Bylaws of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

0.2.6   IAF MLA MC (09)16 – List of normative documents for peer evaluations

0.2.7   IAF ML2 – General Principles on the Use of the IAF MLA Mark

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 5

PART 1   PEER EVALUATION PROCEDURES OF A REGIONAL GROUP AND A SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODY

1.0   Introduction

1.0.1**.**   The following documents detail the procedures and requirements for the evaluation of Regional Groups and Single Accreditation Bodies:

IAF/ILAC A1   ILAC/IAF Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements) – Requirements for Evaluation of a Regional Arrangement Group.

IAF/ILAC A2   ILAC/IAF Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements) – Requirements for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body.

1.0.2   This document (IAF ML 4) includes procedures and requirements that are supplementary to those contained in the above documents.

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 6

PART 2   ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO IAF/ILAC A1 AND A2

2.1   Confidentiality

2.1.1. The requirements established in IAF/ILAC A1 and IAF/ILAC A2 apply. All members and observers of the evaluation teams; all members, observers and secretariat personnel of the MLA Management Committee (MC) and the Appeals Panel; other persons having access to confidential information; and all applicants and members of the MLA Group, which request access to any report on pre-evaluation, evaluation and re-evaluation of other applicants and members, must have signed a declaration of confidentiality before being given access. (See ANNEX 1).

2.2.   Evaluation Personnel

2.2.1   IAF peer evaluators and regional peer evaluators are selected and qualified according to IAF/ILAC A1 and IAF/ILAC A2.

2.2.2   Each team leader (TL & TL-R) shall complete an Evaluator Performance Log (see ANNEX 2) for each team member (TM & TM-R) and return the completed form to the Chair of the IAF MLA MC within one month of the completion of the on-site evaluation. Team members may also submit any comments on the team leader to the Chair of the IAF MLA MC using ANNEX 3.

2.2.3   Each MLA signatory or applicant shall respond to a letter (see example given in ANNEX 4) from the Chair of the IAF MLA MC asking for comment on the performance of the evaluation team and particularly of the team leader.

2.2.4   The Chair of the IAF MLA MC and the representative from a Regional Group on the IAF MLA MC, from which the evaluator was drawn, reviews the feedback and agrees on any action, if required. In the case of evaluators from Accreditation Bodies that are not affiliated with one of the Regional Accreditation Groups, the IAF MLA MC Chair will review the feedback with a representative from the Accreditation Body who provided the evaluator.

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 7

2.3.   The Evaluation Procedure

2.3.1.   IAF/ILAC A1 and A2 require an applicant to specify a scope when applying to join the IAF MLA. The structure of the IAF MLA is described in IAF PR 4 which should be consulted when determining the scope of the application to join the IAF MLA. Accreditation Bodies are not required to demonstrate compliance with the full scope of the MLA; ABs can choose to apply for part or all of the scope of the MLA, e.g. some Accreditation Bodies may only wish to apply for the scope of Management Systems as main scope and ISO 9001 as a sub scope whereas other Accreditation Bodies may apply for the full scope of the MLA. However, all Accreditation Bodies, irrespective of the applied scope, shall demonstrate compliance with Level 1 (ISO/IEC 17011).

2.3.2   The MLA MC shall give the evaluation team its mandate with a copy sent to the applicant. The criteria for peer evaluations shall be those defined in IAF/ILAC A1, for Regional Groups, and IAF/ILAC A2, for individual Accreditation Bodies and the list of documents for peer evaluations IAF MLA MC(09)(16) published by the IAF MLA Committee and retained up- to- date on the members only section of the IAF website.

2.3.3   IAF/ILAC A1 and A2, Annex 7, Clause 1.2 indicates that the IAF MLA MC may prepare a summary report for the IAF MLA Group. The process employed in the IAF is to use a Task Force Group (TFG) to initially review the evaluation report, develop an Evaluation Summary Report for initial review by the IAF MLA MC and then sent to the IAF MLA Group for a decision. The Terms of Reference and competencies of the TFG are at ANNEX 5.

2.3.4   Following on from a positive decision by the MLA Group for an Accreditation Body or Regional Group to sign the IAF MLA, the IAF Secretary will organize for the Accreditation Body or the Regional Group to sign a certificate to finalise the process. The certificate shall be signed by the authorized representative of the applicant body and the IAF Chairman.

IAF ML 4:2012　　*International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 8

2.4. Procedure for Acceptance into the IAF MLA Group of an Accreditation Body that has been evaluated and accepted as a signatory by a Regional Accreditation Group

2.4.1.　An Accreditation Body that has been evaluated and accepted as a signatory with the Regional Accreditation Group, on either a multilateral or bilateral basis, can apply to join the IAF MLA Group, providing they satisfy the following criteria:

a) The Regional Accreditation Group has been evaluated and is a signatory to the IAF MLA;

b) The scope of the Accreditation Body's signatory status with the Regional Accreditation Group is within the Regional Accreditation Group's IAF MLA scope; and

c) The Regional Accreditation Group can confirm that the Regional Group's policies and procedures that have been evaluated and accepted by IAF have been applied to the evaluation of the applicant Accreditation Body.

2.4.2　Accreditation Bodies that satisfy the criteria in 2.4.1 and wish to become a signatory to the IAF MLA shall apply by completing the application form that is available on the IAF website and forwarding the completed application form to the IAF Secretary. As the Accreditation Body has already been evaluated by a Regional Accreditation Group, the Accreditation Body does not have to provide the documentation detailed in Question 22 of the application form. Applications should be accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the Regional Accreditation Group identifying the name and the contact details of the applicant and the date of its acceptance by the Regional Accreditation Group.

2.4.3.　Where the application is from an Accreditation Body which is a Member of IAF, the IAF Secretary shall review the IAF membership status of the applicant and seek advice from the IAF MLA MC Chair or Secretary on MLA issues. Provided that the applicant:

- is a signatory to the IAF MoU as an Accreditation Body Member;

- has paid all membership fee dues; and

- is a signatory to a Regional MLA which is itself a signatory to the IAF MLA,

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Issue 6

Page | 9

the IAF Secretary shall advise the IAF Chairman of the applicant's status, and the IAF Chairman shall approve, on behalf of the IAF MLA Group, admission of the applicant as a member of the IAF MLA Group.

2.4.4.   Where the application is from an Accreditation Body which is not a Member of IAF, the IAF Secretary shall first request the body to apply for IAF membership as an Accreditation Body Member. The IAF Secretary shall forward to the applicant a copy of the Application for Membership in the IAF MoU, and ask the applicant to complete and return the application.

2.4.5   Once the applicant has submitted the Application for Membership in the IAF MoU, the IAF Secretary shall report to the Board which shall make a recommendation to the Members and arrange a vote of Members, in accordance with Section 3.01 of the IAF Bylaws. After approval by the Members an invitation to join IAF shall be extended to the applicant.

2.4.6.   Following the admission of the applicant as an Accreditation Body Member and provided that the applicant has paid all membership fee dues, the IAF Secretary shall advise the IAF Chairman that the applicant has met both requirements, and the IAF Chairman shall approve admission of the applicant as a member of the IAF MLA Group.

2.4.7.   The IAF MLA Committee Chairman shall advise the IAF Members and the IAF MLA Group of the admission of the applicant to the IAF MLA.

2.5.   Suspension and Withdrawal from the IAF MLA

2.5.1.   Notwithstanding any other clause in this document, and IAF/ILAC A1 Annex 10 and IAF/ILAC A2 Annex 10, a Regional Group or Accreditation Body member shall not remain a member of the MLA Group if it is, for any reason, suspended or withdrawn from the MoU Group. The IAF Secretary shall immediately notify the MLA MC when any member of the MLA Group is suspended or withdrawn from the MoU for any reason, and the MLA MC shall immediately suspend or withdraw the membership of the Regional Group or Accreditation Body in the MLA.

2.5.2   In the event of suspension, the IAF shall:
- officially notify the Regional Group or Single Accreditation Body that is not affiliated with a Regional Group of the suspension, the reasons for the suspension, the period of the suspension, and the conditions for lifting of the suspension;
- amend the list of IAF MLA signatories to identify that the body is suspended;
- notify all MLA signatories of the suspension;
- remind the Regional Group or Single Accreditation Body of the consequences of suspension; and
- notify the Regional Group or Single Accreditation Body of their right to Appeal the decision.

2.5.3   The consequences of suspension shall be decided by the IAF MLA Group on a case-by-case basis, depending on the reason for suspension. The consequences of suspension may include, for the applicable main scope and/or sub-scope:
- not actively promote the fact that they are a signatory to the IAF MLA;
- for suspended Accreditation Bodies, not issue any accreditation documents that bear the IAF MLA Mark;
- not be able to participate in any ballots associated with the IAF MLA;
- for suspended Regional Groups, notify all signatories to the arrangement of the suspension and the consequences of the suspension as it relates to them;
- for suspended Accreditation Bodies, notify all accredited CABs of the suspension and the consequences of the suspension as it relates to them; and
- notify stakeholders in their economies of the suspension.

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 11

2.5.4 The obligations of the Regional Group or Accreditation Body while suspended are:
- continue to comply with the obligations of full membership;
- cooperate fully with the IAF MLA MC to enable a speedy resolution of the suspension;
- maintain oversight of their signatories or accredited CABs; and
- continue to vote on IAF ballots, other than those associated with the IAF MLA signatories.

2.5.5 In the event of withdrawal, the IAF shall:
- officially notify the Regional Group or Single Accreditation Body that is not affiliated with a Regional Group of the withdrawal and the reasons for the suspension;
- amend the list of IAF MLA signatories to withdraw the signatory;
- notify all MLA signatories of the withdrawal;
- for Regional Groups, terminate the agreement for use of the IAF Mark signed with the Accreditation Bodies recognized by IAF through regional MLA;
- for Single Accreditation Bodies, terminate the agreement for use of the IAF Mark signed with the Accreditation Body;
- remind the Regional Group or Accreditation Body of the consequences of withdrawal; and
- notify the Regional Group or Accreditation Body of their right to Appeal the decision.

2.5.6 The consequences of withdrawal are, for the applicable main scope and sub-scope:
- immediately stop promoting the fact that they are a signatory to the IAF MLA;
- for Single Accreditation Bodies, immediately stop issuing any accreditation documents that bear the IAF MLA Mark;
- for Regional Groups, notify all signatories to the arrangement of the withdrawal and of the consequences of the withdrawal as it relates to them; and
- for Accreditation Bodies, notify all accredited CABs of the withdrawal and terminate all relevant Agreements for the Use of the IAF MLA Mark.

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 12

PART 3   EXTENDING THE SCOPE OF THE IAF MLA

3.1   General

3.1.1   IAF PL 3 – Policies and Procedure for the expansion of the scope of the MLA establishes a process for the development of documentation that is required for extending the scope of the IAF MLA. PL3 requires that the MLA Committee analyses "the need for additional preparation for peer evaluation" before including new main scopes and sub-scopes in the IAF MLA. For sector schemes the Task Group appointed by the Executive Committee "will prepare and agree on any requirements of the MLA specific to the sector scheme".

3.1.2   The preparatory work shall be undertaken by the MLA MC, which shall ensure that all items listed in document IAF-MLA-MC18 (Annex 1) have been considered and action taken in response to each applicable item. The MLA MC shall present to the MLA Committee, for their consideration/approval, the outcome of their preparatory work. Peer evaluation activity associated with an extension to the IAF MLA will not proceed until the MLA Committee has approved the scope extension documentation.

3.1.3   One of the most important items listed in IAF-MLA-MC18, is the development of the evaluation methodology. It is recognized that extensions of scope can vary in complexity and, as a consequence, the evaluation methodology associated with each scope extension will have to be developed on a case-by-case basis. This document provides principles that the MLA MC can consider when developing an evaluation methodology for an endorsed scope extension. The evaluation methodology needs to be sufficiently precise to ensure that the IAF and the Regional Groups develop evaluation plans that are consistent.

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 13

3.2 Principles to be considered when developing a methodology for the evaluation of a Regional Group or Single Accreditation Body that applies for an approved scope extension

3.2.1 The following principles shall be considered when developing an evaluation methodology associated with a scope extension:

a) Evaluations associated with extension of scope covering a new main scope shall be in accordance with IAF/ILAC A1 and A2;

b) First sub-scope for each main scope shall be in accordance with IAF/ILAC A1 and A2;

c) The evaluation methodology for additional sub-scopes under the same main scope shall be designed on a case-by-case basis. The evaluation methodology could vary in content from a full evaluation to a document review or self declaration. Some points to consider when establishing the methodology are:

    i) Are there similar sub-scopes already endorsed?

    ii) Can sufficient confidence be gained from undertaking a document review?

    iii) Is a self declaration, in isolation of or in combination with evaluation techniques sufficient?

    iv) Does the scheme require inclusion of specific aspects in the evaluation?

    v) Is an on-site office visit required?

    vi) Coverage of on-site evaluation – does the on-site evaluation require full coverage of the evaluation criteria?

    vii) Is witnessing/observation required?

    viii) For evaluation of Regional Groups, is an observation of the decision making group required?

    ix) Can previous witnessing/observation reports be used as evidence for scope extension?

    x) Should the maturity of an applicant's management process be taken into account?

3.3   Process

3.3.1   As part of the development process, the IAF MLA MC shall request the working group, established in accordance with IAF PL3, to provide information relating to, among other things:

  a)   specific competence criteria for peer evaluators/teams;

  b)   proposed evaluation methodologies for Regional Groups and Single ABs;

  c)   proposed peer evaluators;

  d)   the need for the development of additional MLA-related documents;

  e)   the need for amendments to MLA related documents, e.g. IAF PL3, IAF ML 4, IAF/ILAC A1, A2 & A3, peer evaluation tools, IAF PR4, list of documents used for peer evaluation, etc.

3.3.2   The MLA MC shall action recommendations arising from item 3.3.1 above for the evaluation of Regional Groups and Single ABs.

3.3.3   The IAF MLA MC will develop an evaluation methodology and associated rationale for each extension, considering the evaluation needs of both a Regional Group and Single AB. The methodology shall outline the broad parameters that will comprise the evaluation and which will provide guidance for the evaluation team leader to plan and execute the evaluation. Based on the principles above and the information provided from the working group, the methodology shall identify the need for a full evaluation in accordance with IAF/ILAC A1 or A2 or may consist of other combinations of evaluation techniques, for example, document review, witnessing/observation, self-evaluation, office visits, restricted office evaluation, concentrating on extending activities, observing the decision making process etc. Some typical combinations might be:

  a)   Document Review plus visit to office;

  b)   Document Review plus self-evaluation plus witness;

  c)   AB self-evaluation plus Document Review.

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 15

PART 4   THE IAF MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA)

4.1.   This Arrangement is based on the results of evaluations carried out in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures of the International Accreditation Forum; Inc. (IAF).

4.2.   The parties to this Arrangement are the Accreditation Bodies and Regional Groups recognized by the IAF on whose behalf the Arrangement has been signed (the "participating bodies").

4.3.   Each participating body agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of the MLA.

4.3.1 Each participating Accreditation Body shall:

(i)   maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 and related IAF and IAF/ILAC mandatory documents and, as applicable to the individual Accreditation Body's scope of the MLA, those standards and/or other normative documents endorsed by the IAF, as detailed in IAF PR4;

(ii)   ensure that all accredited bodies conform with, as applicable to the CAB's scope of accreditation, those documents that have been endorsed by the IAF, as detailed in IAF PR4, and related IAF and IAF/ILAC documents detailed in IAF MLA MC (09)16 – List of normative documents for peer evaluations.

4.3.2 Each participating Regional Group shall:

(i)   maintain conformance with IAF/ILAC A1;

(ii)   ensure that all Regional Group MLA signatories maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 and related IAF and IAF/ILAC mandatory documents and, as applicable to the individual Accreditation Body's scope of the MLA, those standards and/or other normative documents endorsed by the IAF, as detailed in IAF PR4;

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 16

(iii)   ensure that all accredited bodies conform with, as applicable to the CAB's scope of accreditation, those documents that have been endorsed by the IAF, as detailed in IAF PR4 and related IAF and IAF/ILAC documents detailed in IAF MLA MC (09)16 – List of normative documents for peer evaluations.

4.4.   Each participating body shall:

(i)   recognize the operation of the other participating bodies as providing equivalent outcomes within the same scope of the MLA;

(ii)   recommend and promote the acceptance of the certificates of conformity that bear a participating Accreditation Body's symbol (preferably in association with the IAF MLA Mark) and are within the scope of the MLA, as being on an equal basis with those of its own accredited bodies;

(ii)   sign a license agreement with the IAF for the use of the IAF MLA Mark; and

(iv)   sign a sub-license agreement with those CABs that are accredited under the scope of the MLA and who wish to use the IAF MLA Mark.

4.5.   Each participating body shall:

(i)   investigate all complaints initiated by a participating body resulting from certificates of conformity issued by the bodies it has accredited within its accreditation program;

(ii)   notify all other participating bodies, as soon as possible, of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in its status, in the operational practices of its system or in its accreditation programs;

(iii)   contribute as appropriate to the work of the MLA Group;

(iv)   participate as appropriate in the meetings of the working group(s) of the MLA Group;

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 17

(v) provide evaluators for the evaluation of applicant Single Accreditation Bodies and Regional Groups and the re-evaluation and maintenance of Single Accreditation Bodies and Regional Groups;

(vi) co-operate with other Accreditation Bodies so that the MLA may be extended;

(vii) use all information in a confidential and professional manner.

(viii) when requested by the applicant/accredited body, work/cooperate with the local participating body when operating outside their own country;

Note: In economies that have multiple participating bodies, the participating body that is working outside their own country will need to identify the most appropriate local participating body on a case-by-case basis.

(ix) as the local participating body, work/co-operate, as far as possible, with participating bodies that are operating outside their own country;

(x) work/cooperate with the local IAF Member (not a MLA signatory) when operating outside their own country to provide, among other things, development opportunities.

4.6.   If, in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures, it is agreed that an additional Accreditation Body or Regional MLA may participate in the MLA, a MLA Signature Sheet shall be signed by the new Accreditation Body or Regional MLA and duly authorized by the IAF Chairman. The new signatory shall be added to the summary list of MLA signatories (available from the IAF website at www.iaf.nu). The same procedure shall be followed if it is agreed that a participant to the Arrangement may extend its accreditation programs.

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 18

4.7. If a participating body wishes to withdraw from this Arrangement or withdraw parts of its accreditation program for any reason whatsoever, that body shall notify the other participating bodies to this Arrangement in writing through the MLA MC not later than three months in advance of withdrawing. Upon withdrawal of a body or a change in the extent of its accreditation programs, that body's MLA Signature Sheet shall be cancelled, a new MLA Signature Sheet shall be signed (if appropriate) and the summary list of signatories shall be revised accordingly.

4.8. Any amendment of the text of this Multilateral Recognition Arrangement shall be approved by the IAF plenary meeting.

4.9. This Arrangement consists of ten (10) Clauses plus the IAF website summary listing of each participating body, along with the extent of its accreditation programs.

4.10. This Arrangement has come into force on: 22 January 1998.

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 19

ANNEX 1   IAF DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I declare that I will not reveal information gained through peer evaluation, peer evaluation reports, or settlement of appeals and complaints to anyone who has not the right of access to such information and who has not signed an IAF Declaration of Confidentiality.

Date:

Name:

Signature:

(This declaration shall be signed by each member and observer of an IAF peer evaluation team, each member, observer and secretariat personnel of the MLA MC and the Appeals Panel, and any applicant or member of the IAF MLA Group.)

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 20

**ANNEX 2   IAF MLA EVALUATOR PERFORMANCE LOG FOR TEAM
MEMBER**
(to be completed by Team Leader)

Confidential

Name of Team Member: _____Employer of Team Member: _____

Evaluated Organisation: _____

Dates of Evaluation: _____Name of Team Leader: _____

Mark one or more of the following performance categories:

(a) ☐ Team Member's performance satisfactory

(b) ☐ Team Member's techniques need to be improved
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(c) ☐ Team Member has an inadequate understanding of IAF and/or
ILAC/IAF and/or Regional Group's documents or ISO/IEC 17011
requirements (see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(d) ☐ Team Member's preparation for visits needs improvement
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(e) ☐ Team Member's written or spoken communication needs
improvement
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(f) ☐ Any other comments (see below)

Commentary
(Please relate comments to each relevant category marked above. Attach extra pages if
needed)

Date: _____Signature of Team Leader: _____

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 21

**ANNEX 3   IAF MLA EVALUATOR PERFORMANCE LOG FOR TEAM
LEADER**
(to be completed by Team Members)

Confidential

Name of Team Leader:_____Employer of Team Leader: _____

Evaluated Organisation: _____

Dates of Evaluation: _____

Name of Team Member Completing this Log:_____

Mark one or more of the following performance categories:

(a) ☐ Team Leader's performance satisfactory

(b) ☐ Team Leader's techniques need to be improved
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(c) ☐ Team Leader has an inadequate understanding of IAF and/or
ILAC/IAF and/or Regional Group's documents and/or ISO/IEC
17011 requirements (see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(d) ☐ Team Leader's preparation for the evaluation needs
improvement
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(e) ☐ Team Leader's written or spoken communication needs
improvement
(see specifics in "Commentary" below)

(f) ☐ Any other comments (see below)

Commentary
(Please relate comments to each relevant category marked above. Attach extra pages if
needed)

Date: _____Signature of Team Member: _____

IAF ML 4:2012   *International Accreditation Forum, Inc.*

Issue 6

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Page | 22

ANNEX 4   EXAMPLE LETTER SEEKING FEEDBACK ON TEAM LEADER PERFORMANCE

(Evaluated Organisation Address)

Dear (IAF contact)

Performance of IAF MLA Evaluation Team

The IAF MLA Management Committee is required to monitor the performance of IAF MLA evaluation teams to ensure they are as effective and consistent as possible. Part of that monitoring involves the performance of the Team Leaders for IAF MLA evaluations.

As your organisation has recently been evaluated by an IAF MLA evaluation team, I am writing as Chair of the IAF MLA Management Committee (MLA MC) to seek your comments on the performance of the team which conducted the evaluation of your organisation.

While I would welcome any comments of a general nature such as "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory", etc, I would invite you to consider the following aspects of the evaluation and, if necessary, to comment on them:

- a)   Was your organisation adequately briefed before the visit on the evaluation team's preparation needs (supply of documents, arrangement of visit schedule, etc)?
- b)   Did the team conduct the evaluation in a comprehensive and objective manner?
- c)   Were the questions and comments from the team clearly communicated?
- d)   Was the exit meeting conducted effectively with appropriate opportunities for your comments on the team's findings?
- e)   Was the report on the evaluation, in your view, accurate and clearly presented?
- f)   Are there any other aspects of the evaluation on which you would wish to comment?

Naturally, we hope that your experiences were positive, but if there are any issues of concern raised by you, these will be carefully considered by the IAF MLA MC to ensure any necessary improvements are made to our evaluation processes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

IAF ML 4:2012

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A MLA
ON THE LEVEL OF SINGLE ACCREDITATION BODIES
AND ON THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL GROUPS**

Issue 6

Page | 23

ANNEX 5   TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TASK FORCE GROUP

Task Force Group for Studying Evaluation Reports

The Task Force Group (TFG), with three members assigned by the IAF MLA MC, has to study the evaluation reports. The members should be Members of the IAF MLA MC, but it is possible to also assign other experienced IAF members outside the MLA MC. The evaluation team should be informed about the establishing of the TFG and the members.

The task of the TFG is to evaluate the report for completeness and good understanding, to study the evaluation report, and complete an Evaluation Summary Report, which will be reviewed by the IAF MLA MC before being sent to the IAF MLA Group for their decision.

The TFG is requested to comment on the good impression of the performance of the evaluation team, the reporting, and the classification of findings.

The TFG is expected to communicate with the evaluation team and, if necessary, also with the AB under evaluation in case there are open, missing or unclear issues in the report in order to solve or clarify the situation.

Competencies to be required from the TFG to undertake the task of studying the evaluation report:

1. To appreciate completeness the TFG will need to have an understanding of what should be in a report from a generic point of view and also what should be in the report from a specific point of view. The TFG shall have collective expertise at the main scope level.

2. The TFG needs to get a feel for the planning and conduct of the evaluation, breadth and depth of the evaluation, findings and their classification, adequacy of the conclusions, and recommendations. The competencies required would be consistent with that of an individual that has been a CB auditor or an AB assessor, but would need to have exposure to the A series documents, IAF MLA P&P, and practical experience in the peer evaluation process.

3. To be able to effectively correspond with the team, the TFG would require good communication skills and an understanding of the criteria and process. The competencies would be similar to those listed in point 2 above.

4. One member of the TFG shall be a qualified peer evaluator.

The Evaluation Summary Report template can be found at IAF/ILAC A1 and A2 Annex 6.

End of Policies and Procedures for a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) on the Level of Single Accreditation Bodies and on the Level of Regional Groups.

Further Information:

For further Information on this document or other IAF documents, contact any member of IAF or the IAF Secretary.

For contact details of members of IAF see - IAF Web Site - <http://www.iaf.nu>

Secretariat:

IAF Corporate Secretary,

Telephone +1 (613) 454 8159

email <secretary@iaf.nu>