



**International Accreditation Forum, Inc.**

**IAF Mandatory Document**

**IAF Mandatory Document  
for  
Harmonization of Sanctions to be  
applied to Conformity Assessment  
Bodies**

**Issue 1, Version 2**

**(IAF MD 7:2010)**

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

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

AB members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) conduct regular evaluations of each other to assure the equivalence of their accreditation programs. The IAF MLAs operate at two levels:

- A MLA for the accreditation of CABs to standards including ISO/IEC 17020 for inspection bodies, ISO/IEC 17021 for management systems CABs, ISO/IEC 17024 for personnel CABs and ISO/IEC Guide 65 for product CABs, is considered a framework MLA. A framework MLA provides confidence that accredited CABs are equally reliable in the performance of conformity assessment activities.
- A MLA for the accreditation of CABs that also includes the specific conformity assessment standard or scheme as a scope of accreditation provides confidence in the equivalence of certification.

An IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of certification. An organization or person with certification to a specific standard or scheme that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide thereby facilitating international trade.

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### **Introduction to IAF Mandatory Document**

The term “should” is used in this document to indicate recognized means of meeting the requirements of the standard. A CAB can meet these in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated to an Accreditation Body (AB). The term “shall” is used in this document to indicate those provisions which, reflecting the requirements of the relevant standard, are mandatory.

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## IAF Mandatory Document for Harmonization of Sanctions to be applied to Conformity Assessment Bodies

*This document is mandatory for the consistent application of Clause 7.13 of ISO/IEC17011:2004 under specific circumstances described in this document. This document does not supersede any of the requirements of that standard.*

### 0 INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 Under ISO/IEC 17011, Accreditation Bodies (ABs) are required to have procedures for suspension, withdrawal or reduction of the accreditation scope (refer to ISO/IEC 17011 Clause 7.13.1).
- 0.2 The intention of this document is to clarify the situations where the sanctions shall be applied to applicant or accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and the subsequent necessary communication which shall be taken by ABs.
- 0.3 The following are applicable not only to the scope of the IAF MLA but also to any other IAF accreditation activities, not just the management system certification. Other situations are at individual AB's discretion.
- 0.4 Clause 2 states some situations that frequently lead to sanctions by an AB and Clause 3 describes sanctions that are normally applied progressively by an AB.
- 0.5 Clauses 4 and 5 describe specific instances in which there shall be a harmonized approach by all ABs.

### 1. REFERENCES

- 1.1. ISO/IEC 17011 Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.
- 1.2. IAF-ILAC JGA 2007 Sydney Resolution 7 (Refer to Annex 1)

### 2. INITIATION OF SANCTIONS

- 2.1. Situations that lead to sanctions being applied to applicant or accredited CABs include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Failure to resolve nonconformities in accordance with an AB's procedures;
  - Negative outcome of a complaint investigation;

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- Misuse/misrepresentation of an accreditation symbol (see ISO/IEC 17011 clause 8.3.3 and NOTE);
  - Non-payment of fees.

### **3. SANCTIONS AVAILABLE**

#### 3.1. Sanctions available include, but are not limited to:

- Intensification of surveillance (office, witness or document review);
- Reduction of accreditation scope (including geographical scope);
- Suspension;
- Withdrawal;
- Public notice of scope reduction/suspension/withdrawal/misrepresentation of accreditation;
- Legal actions.

NOTE 1: Application of sanctions outlined in this document does not preclude legal action by third parties, regulators, public authorities or any other interested parties.

NOTE 2: Under ISO/IEC 17011 Clause. 8.1.1.(g), there is provision for an AB to refuse services if an AB perceives that any known violation of laws and regulations by the CAB would bring the AB into disrepute.

### **4. SPECIFIC HARMONIZED SANCTIONS**

#### 4.1. The following are situations requiring specific sanctions by the AB:

- 4.1.1. Where there is proven evidence of fraudulent behavior, or the CAB intentionally provides false information, or the CAB deliberately violates accreditation rules, the AB shall initiate its process for withdrawal of accreditation.
- 4.1.2. Where a CAB is providing certification to any standard used as a basis for accrediting CABs (e.g. ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189), the AB shall initiate its process for suspension of accreditation, as this behaviour of the CAB will put the AB, against its will, in the condition of providing the same service that a CAB performs, in violation of Clause 4.3.6 of ISO/IEC 17011. Further decisions shall be based on the actions taken by the CAB.

NOTE: The action detailed in this mandatory document does not override the CABs right to appeal against a decision as described in ISO/IEC 17011 Clause 7.10

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**5. COMMUNICATION**

- 5.1 In each of the situations mentioned in Clauses 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 that lead to suspension or withdrawal of accreditation and after any appeal decision in accordance with the AB's appeals procedures, the AB shall notify the IAF Secretariat of this decision and the reasons. The IAF Secretary shall then communicate the decision and status to all IAF Member ABs in the following format:

“[Name of AB] [state the action as ‘withdrew’ or ‘suspended’] accreditation of [Name of CB] on [date] for [state the proven offence]”.

End of IAF Mandatory Document for Harmonization of Sanctions to be applied to Conformity Assessment Bodies.

**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>>

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Annex 1:

IAF-ILAC JGA 2007 Sydney Resolution 7 – Certification to accreditation standards

The IAF and ILAC Joint General Assembly, acting on the recommendation of the JCCC, resolves that when a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB), accredited by an Accreditation Body (AB), is providing certification to any standard used as a basis for accrediting CABs (e.g. ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO 15189), the AB shall initiate its process for suspension of accreditation, as this behaviour of the CAB will put the AB, against its will, in the condition of providing the same service that a CAB performs, in violation of clause 4.3.6 of ISO/IEC 17011. Further decisions shall be based on the actions taken by the CAB.

All IAF and ILAC AB members shall include a suitable provision on such a possibility in their contracts with CABs.

Note: It is accepted that a CAB may have to assess subcontractors to confirm that they meet the CABs' requirements, which may include accreditation standards e.g. ISO/IEC 17025. Documentation issued to subcontractors as a result of a successful assessment should clearly state that this is only for the purposes of the subcontract and is not certification or accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011.