



IAF GENERAL BROCHURE



Accredited Once Accepted Everywhere

www.iaf.nu



History

IAF was formed from the first meeting of 'Organisations that Accredite Quality System Registrars and Certification Programmes', which was held on 28 January 1993 in Houston, USA. The meeting was attended by representatives from the USA, Mexico, The Netherlands, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Japan.

The purpose of IAF is to operate a programme for the accreditation of bodies dealing with conformity assessment, in order to ensure that certificates of conformity and validation and verification statements issued in one region or economy are accepted in other regions or economies. Also, through the programme, IAF aims to develop equivalent conformity assessment procedures for implementation by accreditation, certification and validation and verification bodies.

To achieve the above goals, member organisations engaged in regular discussions seeking agreement on the desirability of mutual recognition of each other's accreditation systems and cooperated with one another in exchanging information and procedures on their accreditation programmes.

Later, these meetings would be identified as being annual meetings of IAF. They are intended to contribute to mutual understanding and to build confidence in the operation of such accreditation programmes in the interest of international trade.

The Role and Objectives of IAF

The primary objective of IAF is to develop a single, worldwide programme of conformity assessment, reducing risk for business and end users by ensuring reliable accredited certificates and validation and verification statements.

Introduction

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is a worldwide association of accreditation bodies, Certification Body Associations and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, processes, services, personnel, validation and verification and other similar programmes of conformity assessment.

Accreditation assures businesses and end users that Conformity Assessment Bodies have the required competence and impartiality to fulfill their role as evidenced by the fulfillment of specific accreditation requirements.

IAF operates a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) amongst its member Accreditation Bodies (ABs) that ensures the mutual recognition of accredited certification, validation and verification among signatories to the MLA, and subsequently facilitates acceptance of accredited certification or accredited validation or verification statements in various global markets based on one accreditation.

The benefit of an MLA to business is that, if standards and specifications are the same and the conformity assessment methods provide equivalent outcomes, one certificate or validation or verification statement can be recognised around the world, thus lowering the cost of accredited certification and validation and verification and reducing the risk of products or services being rejected by international trading partners.

The MLA contributes to the freedom of world trade by eliminating technical barriers. IAF works to find the most effective way of achieving a single system to achieve the objective of one conformity assessment result being accepted everywhere.

IAF has defined its purpose as follows:

- To work together on a worldwide basis, as an international association of organisations, to achieve common trade facilitation objectives. IAF is a major world forum for developing the principles and practices for the conduct of conformity assessment that will deliver the confidence needed for market acceptance. We act through the accreditation of bodies that certify management systems, products and personnel, as well as Validation and Verification Bodies.
- To promote the worldwide acceptance of certificates of conformity issued by Certification Bodies and statements issued by Validation and Verification Bodies accredited by an Accreditation Body Member of IAF, and seek to add value for all the IAF stakeholders through what we do, and through our programmes.
- To bring together, on a worldwide basis, partner Accreditation Bodies and representatives of stakeholder groups that seek to facilitate global trade through the acceptance of accredited conformity assessment.
- To develop and/or recognise appropriate processes and practices for the conduct of conformity assessment worldwide, and ensure their universal application by IAF Accreditation Body Members and their accredited Certification and Validation and Verification Bodies.
- To consult widely with stakeholders in developing our programmes, and work to deliver the best possible standard of conformity assessment in order to provide our stakeholders with a value added outcome.
- To influence world trade through linking and working with other key international organisations and industry groups.

The Importance of Conformity Assessment in a Global Marketplace

Increasing trade freedom and the development of new manufacturing and distribution technologies has facilitated a rapid growth of world trade. Subsequently, this has resulted in the emergence of thousands of third-party national and multinational conformity assessment bodies.



These organisations evaluate a wide range of products, materials, installations, plants, processes, statements, work procedures, services, management systems and personnel in private as well as public sectors. As and when applicable, conformity assessment bodies also report on a wide range of parameters including compliance with regulations or specifications, quality, fitness for use and continuing safety in operation with the overall goal being to reduce the risk to the buyer, owner, user or consumer of the item or service.

IAF Membership

Membership of IAF is separated into a number of categories:

Accreditation Body Membership:

Open to bodies developing, or conducting and administering, accreditation of entities that perform conformity assessment such as management system certification, product certification, certification of persons, verification/validation, or similar conformity assessment. Accreditation Body Members must declare their intention to join the IAF MLA recognising the equivalence of other members' accreditations to their own.

Association Membership:

Open to groups of entities that engage in, are subject to, make use of, accept or rely on, conformity assessment results from bodies accredited by Accreditation Body Members of IAF.

Regional Accreditation Group Membership:

Open to regional groups of Accreditation Bodies whose aims include the maintenance of Regional Multilateral Recognition Arrangements recognising the equal reliability and/or equivalence of their members' accreditations.

Observers

In cases where the IAF Board of Directors believes it is in the best interests of IAF Members to develop closer relationships with a particular entity, the Board may grant Observer status to such an entity for a period of three years, subject to annual renewal.

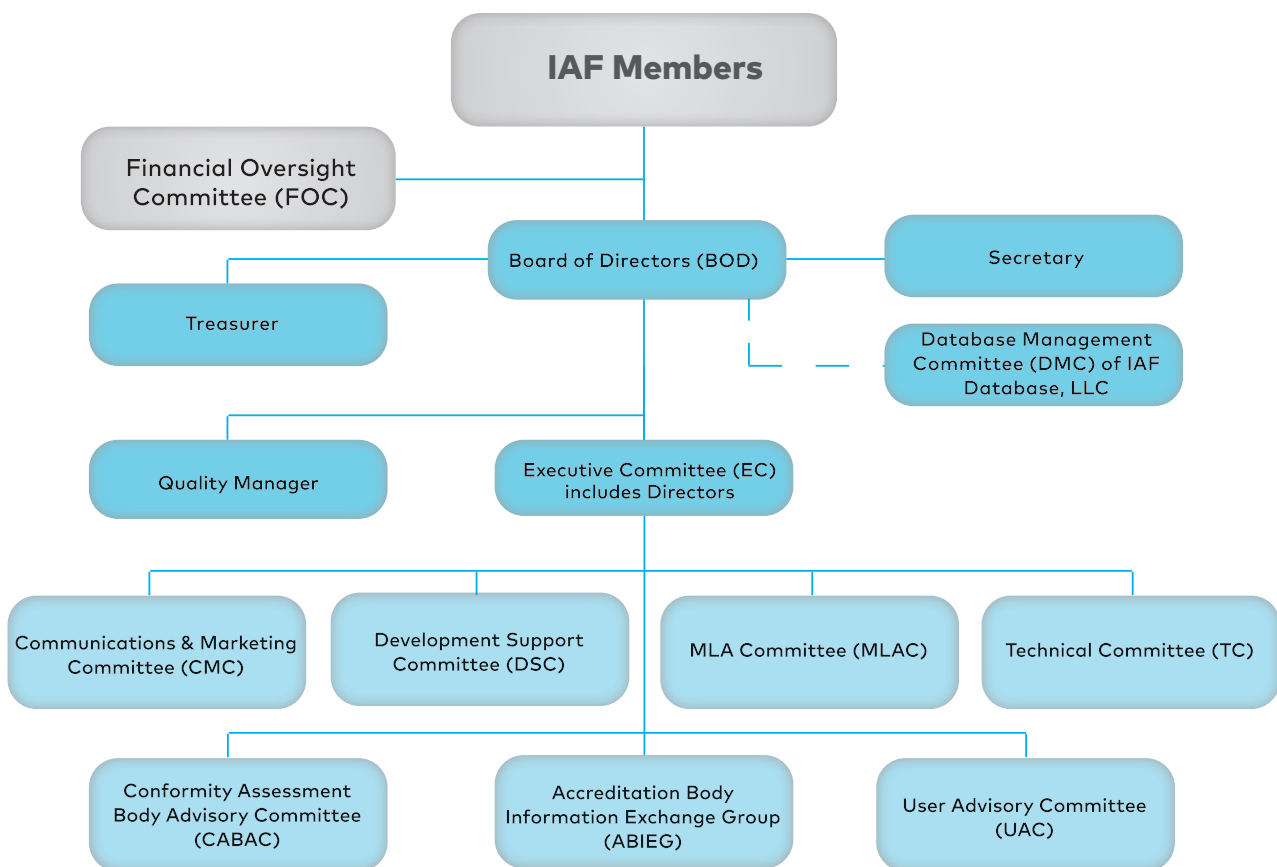
An Observer may be invited to attend any meeting of the IAF and/or participate in its technical work, as determined by the Board from time to time. Observers are not eligible to vote on any matter.

IAF Programmes

The IAF has a wide range of programmes designed to achieve goals that contribute to its two main objectives. The programmes fulfill the following functions:

- Develop application documents, rules, procedures and recommendations for the operation of accreditation, certification, validation and verification, and mutual recognition programmes
- Ensure that all Accreditation Body Members operate to the highest standards of competence and integrity
- Harmonise accreditation procedures and their implementation based on international standards and guides
- Exchange information between Accreditation Bodies
- Develop, maintain and revise as appropriate IAF documents on the application of standards and guides and similar to ensure the consistent application of conformity assessment standards
- Cooperate in the training of assessors and other personnel
- Contribute to the work of ISO and other relevant international bodies
- Liaise with the regional groups of Accreditation Bodies
- Liaise with other relevant bodies such as ILAC, ISO and industry groups
- Assist emerging Accreditation Bodies in low and medium income economies
- As a member of INetQI, collaborate with other international organizations that are active in promoting/implementing conformity assessment as a tool for sustainable development

Organisational Structure of IAF



The terms of reference, tasks and duties of the Members, Committees and the Board of Directors are defined by the Bylaws, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and IAF PL5: Structure of the International Accreditation Forum Inc. The highest level of authority in the IAF is the Members in a General Meeting. General Meetings are held annually to make decisions and lay down policy in the name of the members. The Board is responsible for legal actions to be carried out on behalf of the members, for developing broad policy directions for IAF and for ensuring that the day-to-day work of IAF is carried out in accordance with policies approved by members. The Executive Committee is responsible to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day work of IAF on the basis of decisions made by the Members and directions by the Board of Directors.

IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA)

Accreditations granted by IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) Accreditation Body Members are recognised worldwide based on their equivalent accreditation programmes, therefore reducing costs and adding value to industry and consumers.

Certificates in the fields of management systems, products, processes, services and personnel as well as statements of validation or verification and other similar programmes of conformity assessment issued by bodies accredited by IAF MLA members are therefore relied upon in international trade. The attestations made by accredited conformity assessment bodies at the sub-scope level are considered to be equivalent.

Without international standards and conformity assessment, technical barriers to trade would result in increased costs for importers and consumers, reduced competition and different standards of a product or service.

Structure of the IAF MLA

Under the IAF MLA, IAF ABs meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 (Level 1) are recognized to accredit Certification and Validation and Verification Bodies for various main scopes and sub-scopes according to specific standards. Levels 2 and 3 are main scopes consisting of accreditation programs and endorsed normative documents, while Levels 4 and 5 are sub-scopes consisting of applicable documents and endorsed normative documents.



The IAF MLA currently consists of the following scopes:
(31 March 2021)

Level 1	ISO/IEC 17011 V2017, V2004													
Level 2	Product Certification	Management Systems Certification										Person Certification	Validation and Verification	
Level 3	ISO/IEC 17065: 2012	ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015										ISO/IEC 17024: 2012	ISO/IEC 14065: 2013	ISO/IEC 17029: 2019
Level 4	GLOBAL G.A.P IFA General Regulations V4	ISO/TS 22003:2013	ISO/TS 22003:2013 FAMI-Qs Rules for certification Bodies Version8	ISO/IEC 17021-3 :2017	ISO/IEC 17021-2 :2016	ISO/IEC 27006 :2015	ISO 50003: 2014	ISO/IEC TS 17021-10: 2018	ISO/TS 22003:2013 FSSC 22000 V5 Scheme Part 3 – Requirements for the Certification Process FSSC 22000 V5 Scheme Part 4 – Requirements for Certification Bodies	ICAO CORSIA ETM-Volume IV V1, ISO 14064-3:2006; ISO 14066:2011				
Level 5	GLOBAL G.A.P IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria V4	ISO 22000: 2018, 2005 (FSMS)	FAMI-Qs Certification Scheme Code Version 6	ISO 9001: 2015 (QMS)	ISO 14001: 2015 (EMS)	ISO/IEC 27001: 2013 (ISMS)	ISO 13485: 2016, 2011 (MDMS) (EnMs)	ISO 50001: 2018, 2011 (EnMs)	ISO 45001: 2018 (OH&SMS)	FSSC 22000 V5 Scheme Part 2 – Requirements for organizations to be audited	IPC-PL-11-006	ICAO CORSIA SARPs - Annex 16 Volume IV v1		

- Level 1 is the endorsed normative document for Accreditation Bodies
- Level 2 and 3 are the main-scopes consisting of accreditation programs and endorsed normative documents
- Level 4 and 5 are the sub-scopes consisting of applicable documents and endorsed normative documents

MLA Signatories

Accreditation Body Members of IAF are admitted to the MLA only after stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team. It is the responsibility of this team to assess that the application documents comply fully with both the international standards and IAF guidelines.

Once an Accreditation Body is a member of the MLA it is obligated to recognise the competence and impartiality of accreditations of Conformity Assessment Bodies by all other signatories of the MLA.

The IAF has granted special recognition to the MLA programmes of five Regional Accreditation Groups, the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) and the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC), on the basis of the acceptance of the mutual recognition arrangements established within these organisations.

IAF Members who are signatories of the EA MLA, APAC MLA, IAAC MLA, ARAC MLA or AFRAC MLA for recognised programmes can apply to become IAF MLA signatories.

The IAF encourages its members to join the MLA, as soon as they have passed a rigorous evaluation process, to ensure that their accreditation programmes are of a world class standard.

The benefit of joining the IAF MLA is that certificates and/or validation or verification statements issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by IAF MLA signatories are considered equivalent in worldwide IAF programmes.

A list of signatories is available on the IAF website: iaf.nu/en/recognised-abs/



Developing Economies

IAF provides technical assistance to emerging Accreditation Bodies in low and lower-middle income economies through its Development Support Programme.

It also provides financial assistance to help emerging Accreditation Bodies e.g. attend IAF meetings and training programmes.

The programme also provides support for the participation by low and lower-middle income economy representatives on the IAF Board and other IAF committees.

IAF also encourages membership from Accreditation Bodies in low and lower-middle income economies in order that they may benefit from the opportunity to participate and interact in IAF meetings and from the technical assistance available to Members.

The IAF Development Support programme includes workshops, seminars and specific training

programmes for the staff members of emerging Accreditation Bodies. In addition, it provides expert advice and encourages staff from emerging bodies to observe experienced staff from other Accreditation Bodies conducting assessments in a peer learning environment.

IAF and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) co-operate in providing technical assistance programmes for emerging organisations.

Public Sector Assurance

Public Sector Assurance is a website that has been developed by [INetQI](#) members (International Network on Quality Infrastructure), where government officials and regulators are able to access case studies from around the world in key policy areas demonstrating how different tools are able to deliver results.

The site also contains links to independent research where conformity assessment is, and can be, used for policy areas such as economic development, healthcare, environmental protection, energy, food safety, construction, crime and security.



**PUBLIC SECTOR
ASSURANCE**

www.publicsectorassurance.org



Business Benefits

Also developed by [INetQI](#) members, Business Benefits website provides further examples of how businesses can benefit from standards and accreditation. This site includes case studies, research papers, and supporting materials that cite tangible financial data to evidence the cost savings achieved whether through resource efficiency or meeting regulation at lower cost, the value of accessing new markets, or savings achieved through recognition from organisations such as insurers, regulators or purchasers.

www.businessbenefits.org



**BUSINESS
BENEFITS**

Evidence. Impact. Value.

IAF CertSearch



IAF CertSearch is a global database where users can search and validate the status of accredited certification issued by a Certification Body which has been accredited by an IAF MLA signatory Accreditation Body under the main scope ISO/IEC 17021-1. It also helps to distinguish between certificates issued by accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) from the certificates issued by non-accredited CBs, and to check the authenticity of a certificate.

www.iafcertsearch.org

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