



APLAC

Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

**ASIA PACIFIC
LABORATORY
ACCREDITATION
COOPERATION**

**MUTUAL
RECOGNITION
ARRANGEMENT**

PREAMBLE

The Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) is an organisation of laboratory, reference material producer and inspection body accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific Region, formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 1995, among 20 accreditation bodies. In October 2006 APLAC became incorporated in New Zealand and the APLAC Constitution was adopted.

Under its Constitution APLAC members commit to cooperate so as to generally improve standards of testing, calibration, inspection and related activities (that include reference material production) in the economies of the region, and to enhance the free trade objectives of the region, and between the region, and economies elsewhere.

APLAC is one of the Specialist Regional Bodies supporting the trade facilitation activities of the APEC¹ Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC).

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) as a means by which the signatories formally recognise with mutual confidence one another's accreditations within each signatory's scope of recognition under this MRA. The scopes of recognition (testing; calibration; ISO 15189; inspection; reference material production) are listed below for each signatory.

This MRA does not supersede other recognitions required by laws and regulations in the economies of the signatory bodies.

PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

The principal elements of the APLAC MRA, listed below, establish confidence among the signatory accreditation bodies. These elements are designed to ensure conformity with the requirements in order to establish and maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence of APLAC signatories and their accredited laboratories, inspection bodies and reference material producers. The elements are:

- 1** Exchange of information on the development and operation of APLAC member laboratory, inspection body and reference material producer accreditation bodies.
- 2** Participation in the work and decision making of the APLAC General Assembly, including timely return of postal ballots.
- 3** Participation in international interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs.
- 4** Participation in the technical and other work of APLAC related to accreditation of testing (including medical) and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies and reference material producers in various technical fields.
- 5** Evaluation of applicants to this Arrangement is in the form of visits by teams of evaluators constituted and operating in accordance with the requirements of the APLAC document, APLAC MR 001, *Procedure for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual*

¹ Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

Recognition Arrangements Amongst Accreditation Bodies to determine if the applicant meets the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

- 6 Evaluation of signatories to the Arrangement takes place at intervals of approximately four years for the purpose of assuring that the signatory bodies continue to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011.
- 7 Observation of applicant bodies' assessments of accredited and applicant laboratories to determine if these laboratories meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories*, or of ISO 15189, *Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence (for medical laboratories)*, observation of applicant bodies' assessments of accredited and applicant inspection bodies to determine if these inspection bodies meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020 *General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection*, and observation of applicant bodies' assessments of accredited and applicant reference material producers to determine if these reference material producers meet the requirements of ISO Guide 34, *General requirements for the competence of reference material producers*, in combination with ISO/IEC 17025.
- 8 Application, evaluation, decisions, and maintenance pertaining to the MRA are conducted in accordance with the APLAC MR 001 *Procedures for establishing and maintaining mutual recognition arrangements amongst accreditation bodies* or its equivalent.
- 9 Appropriate information developed during the evaluation of applicants and periodic re-evaluation of signatories is shared among the signatories on a confidential basis.
- 10 Confidence in the national measurement institutes that underpin the traceability of measurement claimed by accredited laboratories, inspection bodies and reference material producers, and support for the measurement comparison activities of CIPM² and regional metrology organisations.

ARRANGEMENT

Upon fulfilling the requirements described in the Principal Elements of Mutual Confidence described above, each signatory to the APLAC MRA enters into the following Arrangement:

- 1 Each APLAC MRA Signatory for Testing, Calibration, ISO 15189, Inspection and Reference Material Production:
 - (i) uses equivalent procedures in the accreditation of laboratories under ISO/IEC 17011, any additional normative documents as specified in APLAC MR 001 and ISO/IEC 17025, or ISO 15189 for medical laboratories, uses equivalent procedures in the accreditation of inspection bodies under ISO/IEC 17011 any additional normative documents as specified in APLAC MR 001 and ISO/IEC 17020, and uses equivalent procedures in the accreditation of reference material producers under ISO/IEC 17011 any additional normative documents as specified in APLAC MR 001 and ISO Guide 34 in combination with ISO/IEC 17025;

² Comité International des Poids et Mesures

- (ii) recognises, within its scope of recognition in this MRA, the accreditation of a laboratory, inspection body or reference material producer by other signatories as being equivalent to an accreditation by its own organisation;
 - (iii) accepts, for its own purposes, endorsed test reports, calibration certificates and inspection reports issued by laboratories and inspection bodies, and endorsed reference material certificates and statements issued by reference material producers accredited by other signatories on the same basis as it accepts endorsed test reports, calibration certificates, inspection reports or reference material certificates issued by its own accredited laboratories, inspection bodies and reference material producers;
 - (iv) recommends and promotes the acceptance by users in its economy of endorsed test reports, calibration certificates, inspection reports, and reference material certificates and statements issued by organisations accredited by other signatories;
 - (v) investigates all complaints initiated by a signatory resulting from endorsed test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories, endorsed inspection reports issued by their accredited inspection bodies or endorsed reference material certificates and statements issued by their accredited reference material producers;
 - (vi) contributes to the work of the APLAC MRA Council;
 - (vii) participates in the work of APLAC including the return of ballots;
 - (viii) provides evaluators for the evaluation and re-evaluation of accreditation bodies appropriate to their size and to the needs of the APLAC MRA Council as resolved periodically by the MRA Council;
 - (ix) uses all information obtained from the peer evaluation process in a confidential and professional manner;
 - (x) informs one another, as soon as possible, of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in the status and/or operational practices of its accreditation body.
- 2** The scope of recognition of a signatory may be extended or reduced following a re-evaluation.
- 3** The addition of new signatories to the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement or the withdrawal of an APLAC MRA signatory will not change the terms of this Arrangement.
- 4** The conclusion of a further Arrangement between APLAC and a recognised laboratory, reference material producer and/or inspection body accreditation body not participating in APLAC, or between APLAC and another regional association of laboratory, inspection body and reference material producer accreditation bodies, does not change the terms of this Arrangement. The evaluation information may be shared with these bodies only with the agreement of the evaluated laboratory, reference material producer and/or inspection body accreditation body.

- 5** This Arrangement will be null and void if the incorporation and Constitution referred to in the preamble are terminated.
- 6** This Arrangement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing among the signatories.
- 7** In the event of a dispute between signatories to this Arrangement or with applicants concerning elements, objectives, procedures, and requirements, the matter will be referred to the APLAC General Assembly.
- 8** This Arrangement will come into effect for each participant upon signature by the affected parties.
- 9** If a signatory wishes to withdraw from this MRA, it shall notify the APLAC MRA Council in writing not later than three months in advance of the withdrawal. The MRA Council will notify the other signatories. Upon withdrawal of a signatory, its signature sheet shall be deleted from this MRA.
- 10** It is recognised and accepted by each of the signatories that this Arrangement does not create any rights, liabilities or obligations that would have binding effect in domestic or international law. This Arrangement by itself does not provide any recognition or accreditation under any law or regulation in the economy of any signatory.

However, the signatories commit to promote to their governments the use of this Arrangement in support of recognition arrangements in the regulated sector.

MEMBER, APLAC MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

SIGNATORIES

We, the undersigned, endorse the terms of the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement and undertake, to the best of our ability, fulfilment of its objectives.

Testing, Calibration, Inspection, ISO 15189 and RMP

Organisation: CNAS
Economy: People's Republic of China
Authorised Representative: Wei Hao

Testing, Calibration, Inspection and ISO 15189

Organisation: HKAS
Economy: Hong Kong, China
Authorised Representative: Terence SS Chan

Organisation: IANZ
Economy: New Zealand
Authorised Representative: Dr W L Richards

Organisation: SAC
Economy: Singapore
Authorised Representative: Chang Kwei Fern

Organisation: TAF
Economy: Chinese Taipei
Authorised Representative: Neng-Jong Lin

Organisation: ema
Economy: Mexico
Authorised Representative: Maria Isabel López Martínez

Testing, Calibration, Inspection and RMP

Organisation: NATA
Economy: Australia
Authorised Representative: Regina Robertson

Organisation: A2LA
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: Roxanne M Robinson

Testing, Calibration and Inspection

Organisation:	BoA
Economy:	Viet Nam
Authorised Representative:	Dr Ho Tat Thang
Organisation:	KAN
Economy:	Indonesia
Authorised Representative:	Dr Sunarya
Organisation:	IAS
Economy:	United States of America
Authorised Representative:	Patrick McCullen
Organisation:	NSC-ONAC (previously TLAS)
Economy:	Thailand
Authorised Representative:	Ratanaporn Chuengsnaguansit

Testing, Calibration and ISO 15189

Organisation:	NABL
Economy:	India
Authorised Representative:	Dr B. Hari Gopal
Organisation:	JAB
Economy:	Japan
Authorised Representative:	Yuichiro Isu
Organisation:	Standards Malaysia on behalf of the Government of Malaysia
Economy:	Malaysia
Authorised Representative:	Mariani Mohammed

Testing, Calibration and RMP

Organisation:	IAJapan
Economy:	Japan
Authorised Representative:	Dr Katuo Seta
Organisation:	ACLASS
Economy:	United States of America
Authorised Representative:	Keith Greenaway

Testing and Calibration

Organisation:	NVLAP
Economy:	United States of America
Authorised Representative:	Warren Merkel

Organisation: Standards Council of Canada/Conseil canadien des normes
Economy: Canada
Authorised Representative: Peter Clark

Organisation: KOLAS
Economy: Korea
Authorised Representative: Yang Whan Jeong

Organisation: PAO (previously BPSLAS)
Economy: The Philippines
Authorised Representative: Cirila Botor

Organisation: L-A-B
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: R Douglas Leonard

Organisation: PNAC
Economy: Pakistan
Authorised Representative: Shaukat Hussain

Organisation: PJLA
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: Tracy Szerszen

Testing and ISO 15189

Organisation: BLQS, DMSc
Economy: Thailand
Authorised Representative: Panadda Silva

Organisation: SLAB
Economy: Sri Lanka
Authorised Representative: B S P Mendis

Testing

Organisation: VLAC
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Seiichi Kawashima

Organisation: CALA (previously CAEAL/ACLAE)
Economy: Canada
Authorised Representative: J E J Gravel

Organisation: DSS
Economy: Thailand
Authorised Representative: Suchin Srikongsri

Organisation: AAC Analitica
Economy: Russia
Authorised Representative: Dr Olga Eroshina

Inspection

Organisation: JAS-ANZ
Economy: Australia and New Zealand
Authorised Representative: Anthony M Craven

Chair, APLAC MRA Council:

Barry Ashcroft

Date

Chair, APLAC:

Terence S S Chan

Date