



**ILAC Policy for cooperation between  
ILAC Arrangement Signatories when  
conducting assessments outside its own  
economy**

**ILAC-PXX:200X**

## About ILAC

ILAC is the global association for the accreditation of laboratories, inspection bodies, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers, with a membership consisting of accreditation bodies and stakeholder organisations throughout the world.

It is a representative organisation that is involved with:

- the development of accreditation practices and procedures,
- the promotion of accreditation as a trade facilitation tool,
- supporting the provision of local and national services,
- the assistance of developing accreditation systems,
- the recognition of competent testing (including medical) and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers around the world.

ILAC actively cooperates with other relevant international organisations in pursuing these aims.

ILAC facilitates trade and supports regulators by operating a worldwide mutual recognition arrangement – the ILAC Arrangement - among Accreditation Bodies (ABs). The data and test results issued by laboratories, and inspection bodies, collectively known as Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), accredited by ILAC Accreditation Body members are accepted globally via this Arrangement. Thereby, technical barriers to trade, such as the re-testing of products each time they enter a new economy is reduced, in support of realising the free-trade goal of “accredited once, accepted everywhere”.

In addition, accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring that accredited CABs are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation.

Further, the results from accredited facilities are used extensively by regulators for the public benefit in the provision of services that promote an unpolluted environment, safe food, clean water, energy, health and social care services.

Accreditation Bodies that are members of ILAC and the CABs they accredit are required to comply with appropriate international standards and the applicable ILAC application documents for the consistent implementation of those standards.

Accreditation Bodies having signed the ILAC Arrangement are subject to peer evaluation via formally established and recognised regional cooperation bodies using ILAC rules and procedures prior to becoming a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement.

The ILAC website provides a range of information on topics covering accreditation, conformity assessment, trade facilitation, as well as the contact details of members. Further information to illustrate the value of accredited conformity assessment to regulators and the public sector through case studies and independent research can also be found at [www.publicsectorassurance.org](http://www.publicsectorassurance.org).

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## PREAMBLE

ILAC is the international association for accreditation bodies (ABs) providing accreditation of laboratories, inspection bodies, proficiency testing providers, and reference material producers, collectively known as Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). ILAC provides the global perspective and infrastructure that supports the demonstration of technical competence and the equivalence of the accreditation worldwide performed by ABs that are signatories to the ILAC Arrangement (also known as the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)). ABs generally provide conformity assessment body (CAB) accreditation to their domestic markets. ABs may, however, have a policy to meet the demand for accreditation from a broader market, "foreign accreditation".

The ILAC Arrangement is intended to provide regulators and other specifiers with the confidence and trust necessary to accept conformity assessment activities or results from CAB's accredited by signatory accreditation bodies. In this regard, it is essential that any relevant regulatory, legal, and specific technical requirements applicable to the accreditation scheme are complied with, irrespective of whether the AB is foreign or domestic.

## PURPOSE

The principles set out in this document serve to strengthen the international network of accreditation bodies through the ILAC Arrangement. These principles seek to assist the objectives of protecting public interest, such as health and safety of consumers and facilitating international trade by maintaining a high level of rigour, robustness and equivalence in the accreditation process. This to ensure the impartiality of ABs, and ensuring all accredited CABs fully meet the standards required for accreditation and ILAC requirements. While doing so ILAC facilitates mutual recognition and promotes the overall acceptance of accreditation certificates and conformity assessment results by CABs.

The date of implementation is one year from publication of this document, that is month 20xx.

## AUTHORSHIP

This publication was prepared by the ILAC Executive Committee and endorsed for publication by a decision of the ILAC General Assembly in 20xx.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1. APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND RESOURCE REVIEW

- 1.1 Where an AB offers accreditation outside its economy where domestic ILAC Arrangement signatories exist, it shall have a policy and a documented process to promote the ILAC Arrangement (as specified in IAF/ILAC A2, Clause 2.2.1.6, and ILAC-P5, Clause 4(i) and (iii)). The AB's documented process shall include the following steps before accepting the application:

Upon receipt of an application requiring any assessment activity outside its economy, the AB shall inquire, in writing:

- if the applicant is aware of the ILAC Arrangement signatory domestic ABs and the equivalence of accreditations by signatories of the ILAC Arrangement,

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- the reasons for which the applicant is seeking accreditation with the foreign AB, and
  - information about its accreditation history.

A record of the applicant's response shall be maintained.

- 1.2 Records associated with the implementation of this document shall be maintained and made available during the MRA peer evaluation process.

## 2. COOPERATION AMONG ACCREDITATION BODIES

- 2.1 The principles for cooperation among ILAC member bodies apply to any assessment type, i.e., initial assessment, reassessment, remote assessment, witnessed assessment, etc. performed by an AB outside its economy.
- 2.2 The foreign AB shall cooperate with each AB signatory to the ILAC Arrangement in the economies in which the foreign AB offers accreditation. The cooperation shall be to the extent that is necessary and agreed between the ABs.
- 2.3 If the applicant would like to have its accreditation recognized under the ILAC Arrangement, the foreign AB shall seek acceptance from the applicant, in writing, before corresponding with the domestic ABs about the applicant. With authorization from the applicant, the foreign AB shall provide the application information, as well as the assessment plan, to the domestic AB.
- 2.4 If the applicant refuses to allow the sharing of its application information and the assessment plan with the domestic AB, the foreign AB shall record the reasons for the applicant's refusal, and shall inform the domestic AB of the reasons (without identifying the applicant). Under these circumstances, the applicant shall be informed, in writing, that any accreditation of the applicant by the foreign AB shall not be recognized under the ILAC Arrangement.
- 2.5 If the domestic AB does not respond within 14 days to the foreign AB's request for cooperation, the foreign AB shall document this lack of response in its records. As an attempt to cooperate was made, the accreditation associated with the CAB shall be recognized under the ILAC Arrangement.
- 2.6 The foreign AB shall check, where relevant, the status of the domestic accreditation of the CAB, as to whether it might be suspended or withdrawn, and shall take this into account in its assessment activities.
- 2.7 When an AB that is a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement decides to provide accreditation services outside its own economy, it shall ensure that its personnel involved in the accreditation activities have the appropriate technical competence applicable for the conformity assessment activities to be accredited, taking into account all relevant factors such as language, geographic areas, knowledge of local laws and regulations, culture, etc.
- 2.8 To ensure access to relevant competence, notably where the applicant has expressed a desire to be accredited against domestic standards or methods and/or for meeting regulatory purposes, the foreign AB should cooperate, to the greatest extent practicable,

with the domestic AB by using its personnel on the assessment team, where appropriate and acceptable to the applicant.

- 2.9 If it is not possible to include personnel from the domestic AB on the assessment team, cooperation with the domestic AB may be extended, by written invitation, to the domestic AB to observe the assessment, subject to acceptance by the applicant.
- 2.10 Where the domestic AB is not a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement, or where the scope of the domestic AB does not cover the requested activity, the foreign AB should cooperate with the domestic AB to provide the domestic AB with the opportunity to gain experience with the conformity assessment activity, subject to acceptance by the applicant.