



## **IAF Governance Document**

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FORUM, Inc.**

**Issue 3 - 2001**

**(FMoU\_3)**

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited bodies are competent to carry out the work they undertake. Accreditation bodies which are members of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) are required to operate at the highest standard and to require the bodies they accredit to comply with appropriate international standards and IAF Guidance to the application of those standards.

Accreditations granted by accreditation body members of the IAF Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MLA), based on regular surveillance to assure the equivalence of their accreditation programmes, allows companies with an accredited conformity assessment certificate in one part of the world to have that certificate recognised everywhere else in the world.

Therefore certificates in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programs of conformity assessment issued by bodies accredited by members of the IAF MLA are relied upon in international trade.

**Memorandum of Understanding  
Issue 3**

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## **Memorandum of Understanding Issue 3**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 The organisations on behalf of which this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed are Members of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF).

1.2 IAF is an international association of organisations that have agreed to work together on a worldwide basis 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. IAF acts through the accreditation of those bodies that carry out inspections and/or certify or register management systems, products, personnel, and/or other similar conformity assessment programs.

1.3 Membership of IAF is open to organisations, as defined in the Bylaws, that meet the requirements defined in the Bylaws and uphold the objectives of IAF and that are prepared to actively participate in the work of IAF, and which sign this MoU in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.01 of the Bylaws, as a declaration of their commitment to the objectives of IAF and the obligations of Members.

1.4 The primary function of IAF is to provide a single system which organisations with an accredited conformity assessment certificate in one part of the world to have that certificate recognised everywhere else in the world. IAF seeks to achieve that function by promoting the international acceptance of accreditations granted by its signatory Accreditation Body Members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), based on the equivalence of their accreditation programs.

1.5 Members of IAF have rights as set out in Section 3, and the Bylaws.

1.6 The signing of this MoU on behalf of an organisations commits the organisation to support the Objectives of IAF as set out in Section 2, to abide by the Obligations set out in Section 4, and to abide by the requirements of the IAF Bylaws.

1.7 The signing of this MoU on behalf of an organisation is a declaration made in accordance with the requirements of the Bylaws of IAF.

1.8 The organisation and person making this declaration acknowledges that IAF may, in its discretion, admit to membership those organisations which have stated objectives compatible with the IAF Charter, including the facilitation of efficient commerce between economies.

## **2 Objectives**

2.1 The objectives of IAF are to:

- a. ensure that accredited conformity assessment activities are effective in adding value to the facilitation of global trade;
- b. facilitate world trade by -
  - (a) promoting common application of the requirements for inspections, certifications and/or registrations, or similar programs of conformity assessment;
  - (b) promoting the equivalence of accreditations granted by Accreditation Body Members of inspection programs, certification and/or registration programs, or similar programs of conformity assessment; and
  - (c) providing technical assistance to emerging economies that are developing conformity assessment accreditation programs;
- c. establish and maintain confidence in the accreditation programs operated by Accreditation Body Members and in the activities of conformity assessment bodies accredited by them by:
  1. participation by Accreditation Body Members and Regional Groups in the worldwide Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA).
  2. exchange of information;
  3. participation in IAF activities; and
  4. participation in regional groupings where they exist;
- d. support the implementation by accreditation and conformity assessment bodies of those international standards and guides which are endorsed by IAF, and to contribute to their development as necessary;
- e. harmonise the application of criteria for the operation of the Accreditation Body Members' accreditation schemes, based on IAF endorsed international standards and guides, and publicly available IAF guidance documents on the application of those standards and guides;
- f. establish and maintain an MLA based on the equivalence of the Accreditation Body Members' accreditation programs verified through peer evaluation and/or re-evaluation among Accreditation Body Members, such that all parties have confidence in the declared equivalence;
- g. promote the international acceptance of the MLA, and of regional group MLAs, on the equivalence of the operation of their accreditation programs, and the international acceptance of conformity assessment results from bodies accredited by Members of the MLA; and

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- h. open and maintain channels for the interchange of information and knowledge between Accreditation Body Members and other relevant bodies;

### **3 Rights**

3.1 To achieve the aims and objectives of IAF, each Member has the right to:

- a. participate in meetings and activities organised on behalf of IAF, including the activities of its subordinate committees; and
- b. obtain non-confidential information on the operation of the accreditation programs of other Accreditation Body Members.

### **4 Obligations**

4.1 All Members of IAF commit themselves to the pursuance of the objectives of IAF. In particular, each IAF Member commits itself to:

- a. abide by the requirements of the IAF Certificate of Incorporation and the IAF Bylaws as adopted by a vote of the Members of IAF from time to time;
- b. conform with the rules and procedures of IAF as adopted by the Members voting in accordance with the rules in the Bylaws;
- c. support the world-wide acceptance of the IAF MLA between Accreditation Body Members that operate the same IAF endorsed accreditation programs;
- d. actively promote the acceptance of the equivalence of the accreditations granted by Members of an IAF MLA, that are covered by the scope of the respective MLA;
- e. actively promote the equivalence of accredited conformity assessment and other results of accredited assessment activities, granted by bodies accredited by Members of an IAF MLA, that are covered by the scope of the respective MLA;
- f. endeavour to prevent unauthorised disclosure of any confidential information gained within IAF;
- g. pay all monies due to IAF; and
- h. make available on request to IAF its rules, objectives, aims, membership and other documentation, as agreed from time to time.

4.2 Each Accreditation Body Member commits itself to:

- a. operate and/or develop its IAF endorsed accreditation programs in conformity with relevant international standards and/or guides endorsed by IAF, and publicly available IAF application guidance documents and policies on accreditation, which are endorsed by IAF from time to time;

- b. require the bodies it accredits for IAF endorsed programs to operate in accordance with the IAF guidance documents on the application of endorsed standards or guides for the provision of conformity assessment programs which are endorsed by IAF from time to time;
- c. seek membership of a relevant IAF MLA for each mature program it operates for which any IAF MLA has coverage, and accordingly subject itself to peer evaluation by other IAF Accreditation Body Members;
- d. seek and claim endorsement and/or recognition of itself as an Accreditation Body Member of IAF only in respect of those programs that are available for any other Accreditation Body Member of IAF to operate.
- e. seek, and claim, recognition of itself through membership of an IAF MLA, only for a program or programs available to other Accreditation Body Members;
- f. on achieving membership of an IAF MLA, maintain conformity with the policy and procedures of that MLA and recognise accreditations granted by other Members of the IAF MLA as equivalent in all respects to its own accreditations covered by the scope of the relevant accreditation programs;
- g. make available to the other Accreditation Body Members, on request, current documents describing the operation of its accreditation programs;
- h. make all of the standards, guides and other normative documents relevant to its accreditation program(s), and over which it exercises control, available, at a fair and reasonable cost, for other Members of IAF to adopt into their accreditation programs; and
- j. make continual best efforts to identify and reduce those accreditation activities which are redundant with other Members through utilization of one another's work.

4.3 Each Association Member commits itself to:

- a. conform, and require its members to conform, with IAF policies on accredited conformity assessment, IAF guidance on the use of accredited marks and the issuing of accredited certificates;
- b. require its members, where appropriate, to abide by the standards or guides endorsed by IAF and the relevant IAF application guidance documents as the basis for the conformity assessment programs they operate.

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## **5 Actions Detrimental to the Objectives of the MoU**

5.1 A Signatory to this MoU that does not continue to uphold its obligations under this MoU will have its membership cancelled in accordance with the Bylaws. Membership of IAF may be terminated by decision in accordance with the Bylaws if the actions of the Member are deemed to be detrimental to the objectives of this MoU or are deemed to bring the good name of IAF into disrepute.

5.2 A Member of IAF which has not paid the membership fees, as levied in accordance with the Rules for IAF Membership Fees, shall have its membership suspended until the fees are paid. When membership is suspended representatives of that Member shall not be permitted to speak or vote in any IAF meeting, and membership of the MLA Group shall be suspended. Membership shall be re-instated if the fees are paid within twelve months of the due date. Membership shall be cancelled if the membership fees are not paid, without explanation accepted by the IAF Board of Directors, twelve months after the due date.

5.3 Should a Member wish to renew its membership of IAF after cancellation, that Member shall apply as a new Member and the application shall be processed in the normal way. Renewal of membership may be subject to the settlement of any outstanding debts that were due at the time membership was cancelled. Reinstatement of membership in the IAF MLA shall be subject to the normal peer evaluation and/or re-evaluation processes.

## **6 Decisions That Bind Members of IAF**

6.1 Decisions that bind Members of IAF shall be made in accordance with the rules laid down in this MoU, the IAF Bylaws, and the IAF Certificate of Incorporation.

## **7 Validity of Memorandum of Understanding**

7.1 This MoU will continue indefinitely unless the signatories agree revision or termination in accordance with these provisions.

7.2 This MoU may be amended only by a resolution of the Members having achieved a two-thirds majority in accordance with the voting rules in the Bylaws, provided that two months prior notice of the amendment has been given to all Members, together with relevant information.

7.3 If any Member intends to terminate its participation in this MoU and its membership in IAF, the Member shall notify the Chairman of IAF of its intention not later than three months prior to the intended termination date.

7.4 Questions of interpretation of this MoU shall be resolved by the Members of IAF in accordance with the voting rules in the Bylaws.

7.5 The signatures on behalf of each participating body are appended in an Annex to this MoU.