

International Accreditation Forum, Inc.



IAF Procedures Document



PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN IAF

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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.

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PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN IAF

1. Background

1.1.1. This Procedure lays down procedures to be followed in processing applications for Membership or Special Recognition status in IAF, consistent with the Bylaws of IAF (IAF PL 2:2005), and with Issue 3 of the IAF Memorandum of Understanding (document IAF-PL-01-007),.

1.1.2. The Certificate of Incorporation says (in part) -

FOURTH: The corporation shall not have any capital stock and the conditions of membership shall be stated in the bylaws.

1.1.3. Article III Section 3.01 of the Bylaws says (in part) –

SECTION 3.01 MEMBERS. Membership shall be constituted, structured and shall operate in a manner that: (a) is consistent with all Members working together on a worldwide basis to achieve common trade facilitation objectives; and (b) supports the key role of accreditation bodies functioning within the international accreditation infrastructure. The Members of the Corporation shall consist of organisations or bodies meeting the classification requirements defined in this SECTION 3.01, and any other requirements determined by the Members from time to time, that are invited to become Members of the Corporation following an affirmative vote of the Members to extend an invitation to the named organisation.

Applicants for membership in IAF shall only be invited into membership if, in the opinion of members:

- a) the applicant has an acceptance or equivalent standing within an economy, region or internationally,
 - b) the structures and activities of the applicant support IAF's objective of working together on a worldwide basis to achieve common trade facilitation objectives,
 - c) the applicant's programs and their application are compatible or in accordance with IAF endorsed International Standards or Application Guidance approved by IAF,
 - d) the programs the applicant offers internationally are available for operation by any other IAF Accreditation Body Member,
- as applicable.

IAF recognizes the contribution that Special Recognition Organisation Regional Accreditation Groups make in supporting the global operation of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) and the implementation of IAF policies and objectives. Applicants for Accreditation Body membership of IAF are encouraged to first seek membership of an appropriate Special Recognition Organisation Regional Accreditation Group, if such membership is available. Demonstration of such an application and, if relevant, reasons given for the rejection, shall be provided. The IAF Board of Directors may agree to review applications from Accreditation Body applicants which are not members of an appropriate Special Recognition Organisation Regional Accreditation Group to determine their possible suitability.

Membership of the Corporation shall take effect upon the payment of any fees set by the Members, and as a declaration of a commitment to the objectives of the Corporation and the obligations of Members by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, approved from time to time by the Members. Accreditation Body Members and Association Members shall be eligible to cast a vote on any matter put to the IAF Membership for resolution and shall be subject to the payment of annual membership subscriptions as determined by the budget approved by the IAF General Assembly. Partner Members shall not be eligible to cast a vote on any matter put to the Members for resolution and shall not be subject to the payment of membership subscriptions. Any Member of the Corporation that does not maintain the commitment made in the Memorandum of Understanding shall cease to be a Member, save that it may seek the approval of the Membership at a meeting called for such a purpose to waive any signed commitment for a period so agreed by the Members. Approval shall be given by a simple majority of eligible members submitting an affirmative vote, in accordance with the voting rules of Section 3.01.08 of these Bylaws.

3.01.01 Classes. The Corporation shall have three classes of Members: Accreditation Body Members; Association Members; and Partner Members (collectively, the “Members”), as follows:

3.01.02 Accreditation Body Members. Accreditation Body Members shall consist of entities that have an acceptance within an economy, region or internationally and are engaged in developing, or conducting and administering, programs to accredit entities that perform inspections and/or certify/register programs related to quality management systems, environmental management systems, products, services, personnel, or similar programs of conformity assessment, that also demonstrate that the operation of such programs is in accordance with international standards and application guidelines which are approved from time to time by the Members.

3.01.03 Association Members. Association Members shall consist of organisations or associations representing the interests within an economy, region or internationally, of a like group of entities that engage in, are subject to, make use of, accept or rely on, programs accredited by Accreditation Body Members of IAF, and which support the objectives of IAF.

3.01.04 Partner Members. Partner Members shall consist of entities representing the interests within an economy, region or internationally, of parts of governments, regulators or of organisations which are not accreditation bodies, which have an interest in conformity assessment, and which support the objectives of IAF. They may be granted Partner Membership following an affirmative vote of the Members to extend an invitation to the named entity. Such Partner Members may be invited to participate in the technical work of the Corporation in a manner determined by the Members from time to time.

3.01.05 Membership Application Approval. All applications for membership in IAF shall be considered by the Board and then submitted to members for voting together with a recommendation by the Board. Voting shall be by a 30 day written ballot. To ensure fairness and transparency, members casting a vote against inviting an applicant to become an accreditation member of IAF shall indicate on their ballot which of the criteria set out in the Bylaws and MoU the applicant has, in their opinion, failed to meet. A membership application shall be approved by a simple majority of eligible members submitting an affirmative vote, in accordance with the voting rules of Section 3.01.08 of these Bylaws.

3.01.06 Member Representatives. Representatives of each Member shall be appointed in the manner determined by each Member to serve as its representative until his or her resignation, removal, death or incapacity (the “Member Representative”). The Member Representative shall be authorised to speak and vote on behalf of the Member at annual and other special meetings of the Corporation, shall be the sole person that may cast a vote for the Member, or in the case of a proxy being issued shall be the person whose signature gives authority to the proxy.

1.1.4. Article III Section 3.13 of the Bylaws says –

SECTION 3.13 SPECIAL RECOGNITION ORGANISATIONS. The Members of the corporation may grant Special Recognition status to organisations that share a common objective with the Corporation. Such organisations will be known as Special Recognition Organisations (SROs). Organisations that are granted Special Recognition status may be represented at any meeting of the Members of the Corporation, and may participate fully in any such meeting, but not be eligible to cast a vote on any matter put to the Members for resolution and not be subject to the payment of membership subscriptions. Special Recognition Status Organisations may be invited to participate fully in committees and working groups of the Corporation, but not be eligible to cast a vote on any matter put to the members of such working groups or committees. The granting of Special Recognition status to an organisation, and the terms and conditions of recognition, shall be determined by a resolution of the Members of the Corporation.

3.13.01 Categories. There shall be two categories of Special Recognition Organisations: Regional Accreditation Groups and Observers .

3.13.02 Regional Accreditation Groups. Regional groupings of Accreditation Bodies may be granted Special Recognition status by an affirmative vote of the Members in order to promote the effective implementation of the Corporation's multilateral recognition arrangement within the recognised regions. Regional Accreditation Groups granted Special Recognition status may be invited to be represented in committees established to enhance cooperation between the Corporation and the Regional Accreditation Groups.

3.13.03 Observers. In cases where the Board of Directors believes it is in the best interests of Members of the Corporation to develop closer relationships with a particular entity, the Board may grant Observer status to such an entity for a period not exceeding one year, but subject to renewal annually. Such an entity granted Observer status may be invited to attend any meeting of the Corporation and/or participate in the technical work of the Corporation in a manner determined by the Board from time to time but not be eligible to cast a vote on any matter put to the Members for resolution and not be subject to the payment of membership subscriptions.

2. Secretariat Procedure for Receiving and Processing Membership Applications

2.1.1. The form Application for Membership in IAF shall be made available to all intending applicants for membership, and shall be available for downloading from the IAF web site.

2.1.2. Applications to join IAF will only be accepted when submitted on the current form Application for Membership in IAF and sent to the Secretary of IAF at the published address of the Secretariat.

2.1.3. Upon receipt of an application, the Secretary shall ensure that all documentation required is included with the application, and that the Application Fee has been received by the Treasurer. If all necessary documentation is not included, or the Application Fee has not been received, the Secretary shall seek it from the applicant body. No further action shall be taken in regard to the application until all documentation has been provided and the Application Fee paid. The Application Fee will not be refundable, but if the application is successful the entire amount of the Application Fee will be credited to the new member's membership fees in the first year of membership.

2.1.4. The Secretary shall review the documentation provided and be satisfied that the documentation provides evidence that the applicant body is eligible for admission to the category of membership sought. The Secretary shall then prepare a Summary of Application which shall be sent to each IAF Director, with a finding as to the acceptability of the applicant for the classification of membership sought.

2.1.5. If the Secretary believes the application should proceed a recommendation should be made to the IAF Board that the application be submitted to members for approval in accordance with Section 3.01 of the Bylaws. If it is believed the application should not proceed at that time the appropriate recommendation should be made to the Board.

2.1.6. If any Director wishes to examine the documentation, the Secretary shall provide all requested documentation to that Director immediately upon receiving a request from the Director.

2.1.7. The Directors shall respond to the Secretary either approving or rejecting the submission of the application to members for a letter ballot, or if the Secretary makes another recommendation, approving or rejecting that recommendation. If the Directors wish more information from the applicant before making a decision they shall specify the information required and the Secretary shall write to the applicant seeking the additional information.

2.1.8. Upon receipt of all the information sought by Directors, the Secretary shall provide that information to all Directors and invite either approval or rejection of the recommendation to submit the membership application for a vote by all IAF members.

2.1.9. If a majority of Directors approve the submission of a recommendation to members that the applicant be admitted to membership, the Secretary shall submit the application to the members for a 30-day ballot, advising members of the IAF Board's recommendation.

2.1.10. Should a majority of Directors decline to approve a recommendation to members that the applicant be admitted, the Secretary shall include the application in the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Directors for discussion. If the Board confirms the decision to reject that application the Secretary shall advise the applicant of that fact.

2.1.11. At the conclusion of 30 days from the date the application was submitted to members the Secretary shall declare the result of the ballot, and advise all members of the result.

2.1.12. The Secretary shall advise the applicant of the result of the ballot and, if that result is acceptance, the Secretary shall require the applicant to sign an IAF MoU Certificate (Signing Sheet).

2.1.13. The Secretary shall calculate the membership fees due from the new member for the remainder of the calendar year, in accordance with the Rules for IAF Membership Fees (ref IAF PL 4:2004). If the amount of membership fees due exceeds the Application Fee already paid the Secretary shall send the member an invoice for the amount now due, payable immediately. If the Application Fee already paid exceeds the amount due, the Secretary shall record the remainder as a credit towards membership fees in the following year.

2.1.14. After the applicant has complied with all the requirements in 2.1.12 and 2.1.13, the Secretary shall advise all members of the admission of the new applicant.

3. Secretariat Procedure for Receiving and Processing Applications for Special Recognition Status

3.1.1. The form Application for IAF Special Recognition Status shall be made available to all intending applicants for Special Recognition status by the Secretariat upon request.

3.1.2. Applications to for Special Recognition status will only be accepted when submitted on the current form Application for IAF Special Recognition Status and sent to the Secretary of IAF at the published address of the Secretariat.

3.1.3. Upon receipt of an application, the Secretary shall ensure that all information required is included with the application. If all necessary information is not provided, the Secretary shall seek it from the applicant body. No further action shall be taken in regard to the application until all information has been provided.

3.1.4. The Secretary shall review the information provided and be satisfied that the information provides evidence that the applicant body is eligible for the grant of Special Recognition status. The Secretary shall then prepare a Summary of Application which shall be sent to each IAF Director, with a finding as to acceptability of the applicant for the grant of Special Recognition status.

3.1.5. If the Secretary believes the application should proceed a recommendation should be made to the IAF Board that the application be submitted to members for approval in accordance with Section 3.13 of the Bylaws. If it is believed the application should not proceed at that time the appropriate recommendation should be made to the Board.

3.1.6. If any Director wishes to examine the documentation, the Secretary shall provide all requested documentation to that Director immediately upon receiving a request from the Director.

3.1.7. The Directors shall respond to the Secretary either approving or rejecting the submission of the recommendation to members for a letter ballot, or if the Secretary makes another recommendation, approving or rejecting that recommendation. If the Directors wish more information from the applicant before making a decision they shall specify the information required and the Secretary shall write to the applicant seeking the additional information.

3.1.8. Upon receipt of all the information sought by Directors, the Secretary shall provide that information to all Directors and invite either approval or rejection of the recommendation to submit the membership application for a vote by all IAF members.

3.1.9. If the majority of Directors approve the submission of a recommendation to members that the applicant be granted Special Recognition status, the Secretary shall submit the proposal to the members for a 30-day ballot, advising members of the IAF Board's recommendation..

3.1.10. Should a majority of Directors decline to approve the recommendation for Special Recognition status, the Secretary shall include the application in the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Directors for discussion. If the Board confirms the decision to reject that application the Secretary shall advise the applicant of that fact.

3.1.11. At the conclusion of 30 days from the date the application was submitted to members the Secretary shall declare the result of the ballot, and advise all members of the result.

3.1.12. The Secretary shall advise the applicant of the result of the ballot and, if that result is acceptance, the Secretary shall make appropriate arrangements with the body granted Special Recognition status for communication between the body and IAF.

4. Secretariat Actions Subsequent to Admission to Membership or Special Recognition Status

4.1.1. After the admission of a new member or the granting of Special Recognition status has been approved by members, the Secretariat shall take the following actions –

- (1) Confirm that the person nominated as Contact Person is correctly identified and that contact details are correct;
- (2) Enter the full address and contact details for the Chief Executive/Chairman and the Contact Person in the Secretariat records;

- (3) Seek advice from the new member of the person nominated as Member Representative in accordance with Section 3.01.06 of the Bylaws;
- (4) Enter the name of the member and the name of the nominated Member Representative in the Member List as required by Section 3.05 of the Bylaws;
- (5) Enter the contact details of the member or Special Recognition organisation in the Membership page of the IAF web site, including the logo of the member or organisation;
- (6) Ensure that the member or organisation is included in distribution lists for all future notifications to members;
- (7) Provide the new member or organisation with Username and Password to gain access to the Members Only part of the IAF web site.

End of Procedure for Handling Applications for Membership in IAF.