



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 and/or 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.

Signatories to the MOU committed to cooperate so as to generally improve standards of testing, calibration and inspection 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; inspection) 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 and inspection bodies. The elements are:

- 1** Exchange of information on the development and operation of APLAC member laboratory and inspection body 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 technical and other work of APLAC related to accreditation of testing, calibration and inspection in various technical fields.
- 5** Evaluation of applicants to this Arrangement is in the form of visits by teams of evaluators constituted in accordance with and operating to the provisions of the document, APLAC MR001, *Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual Recognition Arrangements Amongst Accreditation Bodies* to determine if the applicant meets the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58, *Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems - General requirements for operation and recognition*, and/or

¹ 1 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

ISO/IEC TR 17010 *General requirements for bodies providing accreditation of inspection bodies.*²

- 6 Evaluation of signatories to the Arrangement take place at intervals of approximately four years for the purpose of assuring that the signatory bodies continue to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58 (from 1 January 2006, ISO/IEC 17011) and/or ISO/IEC TR 17010 (from 1 January 2006, ISO/IEC 17011).
- 7 Observation of applicant bodies' assessments of their laboratories to determine if these laboratories meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories* (previously ISO/IEC Guide 25), or of ISO 15189, *Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence* (for medical laboratories), and/or observation of applicant bodies' assessments of their 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*.
- 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 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 which underpin the traceability claimed by accredited laboratories and inspection bodies, and support for the measurement comparison activities of BIPM³ 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, and/or Inspection:
 - (i) uses equivalent procedures in the accreditation of laboratories under ISO/IEC Guide 58 (from 1 January 2006, ISO/IEC 17011) and ISO/IEC 17025 (previously ISO/IEC Guide 25), or ISO 15189 for medical laboratories, and/or uses equivalent procedures in the accreditation of inspection bodies under ISO/IEC TR 17010 (from 1 January 2006, ISO/IEC 17011) and ISO/IEC 17020;
 - (ii) recognises, within its scope of recognition of this MRA, the accreditation of a laboratory or inspection body by other signatories as being equivalent to an accreditation by its own organisation;
 - (iii) accepts, for its own purposes, endorsed calibration, test or inspection reports issued by laboratories or inspection bodies accredited by other signatories on

² ISO/IEC Guide 58 and ISO/IEC TR 17010 were both replaced by ISO/IEC 17011 in September 2004

³ Bureau International des Poids et Mesures

- the same basis as it accepts endorsed calibration, test or inspection reports issued by its own accredited laboratories and/or inspection bodies;
- (iv) recommends and promotes the acceptance by users in its economy of endorsed test, calibration, and inspection reports issued by organisations accredited by other signatories;
 - (v) investigates all complaints initiated by a signatory resulting from test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories and/or inspection reports issued by their accredited inspection bodies;
 - (vi) contributes to the work of the APLAC MRA Council;
 - (vii) participates in the work of APLAC including 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 re-evaluation.
 - 3 The addition of new signatories to the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement or the withdrawal of an APLAC Signatory will not change the terms of this Arrangement.
 - 4 The conclusion of a further Arrangement between APLAC and a Recognised Laboratory and/or Inspection Body Accreditation Body not participating in APLAC, or between APLAC and another regional association of laboratory and/or inspection body 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 and/or inspection body accreditation body.
 - 5 This Arrangement will be null and void if the Memorandum of Understanding referred to in the preamble is 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 of 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 and Inspection

Organisation: NATA
Economy: Australia
Authorised Representative: Regina Robertson

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

Organisation: VILAS
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

Testing and Calibration

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

Organisation: A2LA
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: Peter S Unger

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: NABL
Economy: India
Authorised Representative: Dr Sulbha Gupta

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

Organisation: TLAS
Economy: Thailand
Authorised Representative: Pairoj Sanyadechakul

Organisation: IAJapan
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Dr Katuo Seta

Organisation: JAB
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Yuichiro Isu

Organisation: DSM on behalf of the Government of Malaysia
Economy: Malaysia
Authorised Representative: Mariani Mohammed

Testing

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

Organisation: VLAC
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Seiichi Kawashima

Chair, APLAC MRA Council: _____
 Terence S S Chan _____ Date _____

Chair, APLAC: _____
 A J Russell _____ Date _____