



ILAC Mutual  
Recognition Arrangement  
(Arrangement)

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The ILAC Secretariat,  
c/- NATA,  
7 Leeds Street,  
Rhodes, NSW, Australia, 2138,  
Fax: +61 2 9743 5311,  
Email: [ilac@nata.asn.au](mailto:ilac@nata.asn.au)



# **ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement)**

## PREAMBLE

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) denotes the collaboration of accreditation bodies that accredit calibration laboratories, testing laboratories and/or inspection bodies.

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (hereinafter referred to as the Arrangement) for testing and calibration laboratory accreditation. Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement for testing and/or calibration recognise with mutual confidence one another's accreditations within each signatory's scope of recognition under this Arrangement. The scopes of recognition (testing and/or calibration) are identified in the Annex for each signatory.

This Arrangement is a major co-operative effort to enhance the objective of free trade throughout the world. The criteria for the operation of accredited laboratories and for the operation of the accreditation bodies are currently specified respectively in ISO/IEC 17025, December 1999 (and future versions thereof), ISO 15189 or other standards ILAC deems to be suitable for accreditation, and in ISO/IEC Guide 58 (ISO/IEC 17011:2004, as of 1 January 2006), supplemented by ILAC application documents if necessary.

The principal elements for establishing confidence among the participating accreditation bodies within ILAC are listed below. These elements are designed to ensure conformity with the requirements of the standards, verified by peer evaluation, in order to establish and maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence of ILAC members and their accredited laboratories. The elements are:

1. Exchange of information on the development and operation of accreditation programs of ILAC members, associates and affiliates;
2. Participation in the work and decision making of the ILAC General Assembly and ILAC committees and regional cooperations where applicable;
3. Participation of accredited laboratories in domestic and international interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs;

4. Participation in the work of ILAC with other scientific and technical organisations to address problems related to testing and calibration in various technical fields;
5. Evaluations of applicants and re-evaluations of signatories to this Arrangement conducted in accordance with the relevant ILAC and regional cooperation documents;
6. Observations of applicant bodies' and signatories' assessments of their laboratories to determine if these laboratories meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:1999 (and future versions thereof) or other standards (e.g., ISO 15189) that ILAC deems to be suitable for accreditation; and
7. Confidence in the metrology institutes which underpin the traceability claims of the laboratories by the Arrangement signatories and support of the measurement comparison activities of CIPM (Comite International des Poids et Mesures) and/or regional metrology organisations.

This Arrangement does not affect other recognition required by laws and regulations in the economies of the signatories.

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## MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (ARRANGEMENT)

1. This Arrangement is based on the results of the evaluations carried out in accordance with the relevant standards, rules and procedures contained in the ILAC P-series documents.
2. Each accreditation body signatory to this Arrangement:
  - (i) Agrees to abide by its terms and conditions,
  - (ii) Maintains conformity with ISO/IEC Guide 58 (ISO/IEC 17011:2004, as of 1 January 2006), the supplementary requirements defined in the ILAC P1 document and related ILAC P-series documents, and
  - (iii) Ensures that all accredited laboratories comply with ISO/IEC 17025:1999 (and future versions thereof) or other standards that the ILAC General Assembly recognizes as suitable for accreditation and related ILAC P-series documents.
3. Each recognised regional cooperation shall abide by the requirements defined in ILAC P2.
4. Each signatory:
  - (i) recognizes within its scope of recognition of this Arrangement the accreditation of a laboratory by other signatories as being equivalent to an accreditation by its own organization,
  - (ii) accepts, for its own purposes, endorsed\* certificates or reports issued by laboratories accredited by other signatories on the same basis as it accepts endorsed\* certificates or reports issued by its own accredited laboratories,
  - (iii) recommends and promotes the acceptance by users in its economy of endorsed\* certificates and reports ,
  - (iv) investigates all complaints initiated by a signatory resulting from certificates or reports issued by the laboratories it has accredited within its accreditation programs,
- (v) notifies all other signatories as soon as possible of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in its status, in the operational practices of its system or in its accreditation programs,
- (vi) contributes to the work of the Arrangement Council,
- (vii) participates in the work of ILAC including return of ballots,
- (viii) provides evaluators for the evaluation and re-evaluation of accreditation bodies and regional cooperations as appropriate to its size and to the need of the Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) as agreed periodically by the AMC with the concurrence of the affected recognized regional cooperation,
- (ix) co-operates with other accreditation bodies so that the Arrangement may be extended to include other accreditation bodies and regional cooperations,
- (x) uses all information obtained from the peer evaluation process in a confidential and professional manner, and
- (xi) abides by the rules for use of the ILAC-MRA mark.
5. To participate in the ILAC Arrangement, an accreditation body shall be evaluated in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures defined in the ILAC P-series documents and shall complete a signature sheet authorised by the ILAC Chair (Annex A of this Arrangement). The same procedures shall be followed if a decision is taken to extend its recognition.
6. The scope of recognition of a signatory may be extended or reduced following reevaluation in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures.
7. If a signatory wishes to withdraw from this Arrangement, or withdraw parts of its accreditation program for any reason whatsoever, that body shall notify the ILAC Secretariat in writing not later than three months in advance of withdrawal. The ILAC Secretariat shall notify other signatories. Upon withdrawal of a body, that body's signature sheet shall be deleted and the list of signatories amended accordingly.

\* The word "endorsed" means a certificate or report bearing an Arrangement signatory's accreditation symbol (or mark) preferably combined with the ILAC-MRA mark.



8. In the event of the ILAC Arrangement Council making an adverse decision or finding against a signatory, the procedures for appeal are defined in ILAC P4.
9. Any amendment of the text of this Arrangement shall be approved by the ILAC General Assembly.
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.
11. This Arrangement consists of twelve (12) clauses plus an Annex listing each signatory, along with the scope of its recognition.
12. This Arrangement takes effect upon signature of the affected parties.

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The scope of recognition of a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement is currently limited to:

1. calibration laboratories, and
2. testing laboratories



## ILAC MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

### SIGNATORIES

We, the undersigned, endorse the terms of the ILAC Arrangement and agree to abide by them, to the best of our ability.

**Accreditation Body:**

**Economy:**

**Scope:**

**Authorised Representative:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

**Chairman, ILAC Arrangement Council:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:



The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) is the principal international forum for the exchange of ideas and information on laboratory accreditation. Established in the late 1970s, ILAC membership has grown rapidly and includes representatives from the world's major laboratory accreditation systems in Europe, Asia, North America, Australia and the Pacific. Countries that are developing their own laboratory accreditation systems are also welcome to participate and contribute.

ILAC operates a series of committees which investigate issues such as the harmonisation of international laboratory accreditation practices, the effectiveness of mutual recognition agreements in facilitating trade and the promotion of the aims and awareness of laboratory accreditation around the world. There are regular meetings of individual ILAC committees as well as a major plenary meeting of all ILAC members.

The activities of ILAC affect a diverse range of areas including standardisation, accreditation, certification, testing, calibration, and regulation in both the public and private sectors.

ILAC has a comprehensive website at [www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org) which contains a wealth of information regarding accreditation, testing, trade related publications and other information of interest to industry, regulators, government, trade bodies, laboratories, accreditation bodies, and users of testing and calibration services.

The following ILAC publications are available free of charge on the ILAC website at [www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org):

#### **Brochures**

The ILAC Arrangement

ILAC Information Brochure

Why Use An Accredited Laboratory?

Why Become An Accredited Laboratory?

How Does Using an Accredited Laboratory Benefit Government & Regulators?

The Advantages of Being An Accredited Laboratory

#### **Information Documents (I Series)**

ILAC-I1:1994 Legal Liability in Testing

ILAC-I2:1994 Testing, Quality Assurance, Certification and Accreditation

ILAC-I3:1996 The Role of Testing and Laboratory Accreditation in International Trade

ILAC-I4:1996 Guidance Documents for the Preparation of Laboratory Quality Manuals

#### **Guidance Documents (G Series)**

ILAC-G2:1994 Traceability of Measurement

ILAC-G3:1994 Guidelines for Training Courses for Assessors

ILAC-G4:1994 Guidelines on Scopes of Accreditation

ILAC-G7:1996 Accreditation Requirements and Operating Criteria for Horseracing Laboratories

ILAC-G8:1996 Guidelines on Assessment and Reporting of Compliance with Specification

ILAC-G9:1996 Guidelines for the Selection and Use of Certified Reference Materials

ILAC-G10:1996 Harmonised Procedures for Surveillance & Reassessment of Accredited Laboratories

ILAC-G11:1998 Guidelines on Assessor Qualification and Competence

ILAC-G12:2000 Guidelines for the Requirements for the Competence of Reference Material Producers

ILAC-G13:2000 Guidelines for the Requirements for the Competence of Providers of Proficiency Testing Schemes

ILAC-G14:2000 Guidelines for the Use of Accreditation Body Logos and for Claims of Accreditation Status

ILAC-G15:2001 Guidance for Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025

ILAC-G17:2002 Introducing the Concept of Uncertainty of Measurement in Testing in Association with the Application of the Standard ISO/IEC 17025

ILAC-G18:2002 The Scope of Accreditation and Consideration of Methods and Criteria for the Assessment of the Scope in Testing

ILAC-G19:2002 Guidelines for Forensic Science Laboratories

ILAC-G20:2002 Guidelines on Grading of Non-Conformities

ILAC-G21:2002 Cross Frontier Accreditation — Principles for Avoiding Duplication

ILAC-G22:2004 Use of Proficiency Testing as a Tool for Accreditation in Testing

ILAC-G23:2004 ILAC Evaluator Training Courses

#### **Secretariat Documents (S Series)**

ILAC-S1:2000 Guidelines for the Proposal, Drafting, Approval and Publication of ILAC Documents

ILAC-S2:2003 Rules

#### **Procedural Documents (P Series)**

ILAC-P1:2003 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Requirements for Evaluation of Accreditation Bodies by ILAC-recognised Regional Cooperations

ILAC-P2: 2003 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Procedures for the Evaluation of Regional Cooperation Bodies for the Purpose of Recognition

ILAC-P3: 2003 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Procedures for the Evaluation of Unaffiliated Bodies for the Purpose of Recognition

ILAC-P4:2003 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Policy Statement  
ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Terms of Reference and Composition of the Arrangement Management Committee

ILAC-P5: 2004 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement)

ILAC-P6:2003 Application for Full Member Status

ILAC-P7: 2003 ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Key performance Indicators (KPIs)

ILAC-P10:2002 ILAC Policy on Traceability of Measurement Results

ILAC-P11:2004 Monitoring Performance of ILAC Evaluators