



Cross-Frontier Accreditation Principles for Cooperation

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To obtain permission or for further assistance, please contact:

The ILAC Secretariat

PO Box 7507

Silverwater NSW 2128

Australia

Phone: +61 2 9736 8374

Email: ilac@nata.com.au

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PREAMBLE

This guidance document was first endorsed by the ILAC General Assembly in 2001, as a code of good practice for ILAC member bodies (ILAC Decision GA 5.19). This document has been revised and approved for publication after being endorsed by the ILAC membership.

PURPOSE

1. The ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (the Arrangement) is designed to ensure that endorsed test reports and calibration certificates issued by laboratories, and endorsed inspection reports issued by inspection bodies accredited by ILAC Full Members (i.e. signatories to the ILAC Arrangement) under their defined scopes of accreditation, can be accepted worldwide.
2. ILAC's objective is to offer the benefits of the Arrangement to the market so that duplicate accreditations will not be necessary.
3. For this to be achieved, each accreditation body which is a signatory to the Arrangement provides an equivalent accreditation service. This equivalence is ensured by a peer evaluation process managed under the ILAC Arrangement.
4. The principles set out in this document serve to strengthen the international network of accreditation bodies through the ILAC Arrangement. These accreditation bodies accredit laboratories and inspection bodies that provide conformity assessment activities in different economies. The principles seek to assist the objective of facilitating international trade by removing technical barriers to trade.

AUTHORSHIP

This document has been prepared by the ILAC Arrangement Committee (ARC).

1. CROSS-FRONTIER ACCREDITATION – PRINCIPLES FOR COOPERATION

- 1.1** ILAC is the international forum for accreditation bodies providing accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies. ILAC provides the global perspective and infrastructure that supports the demonstration of technical competence and the equivalence of the accreditation worldwide performed by signatories to the ILAC Arrangement.
- 1.2** The signatories to the ILAC Arrangement generally provide laboratory and/or inspection body accreditation to their domestic markets. Accreditation bodies may, however, have a policy to meet the demand for accreditation from a broader market that may arise in exceptional cases.

2. APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND RESOURCE REVIEW

- 2.1** Some examples of when a laboratory or inspection body might apply for accreditation from a body outside its country (economy) are:
- a. There is no domestic accreditation body.
 - b. The domestic accreditation body does not offer accreditation for the required scope.
 - c. The domestic accreditation body is not a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement.
 - d. The laboratory or inspection body's clients require accreditation by a specific accreditation body, and will not be persuaded to accept the domestic equivalent.
 - e. The laboratories or inspection bodies are part of a group who wants all their laboratories or inspection bodies to be accredited by the same accreditation body.
- 2.2** Where one or more domestic accreditation bodies that are ILAC Arrangement signatories for the requested scope of accreditation exist in the country (economy) of the applicant, and the applicant still elects to apply for accreditation from the foreign accreditation body, the foreign accreditation body should in accordance with the requirements to have a program to promote the ILAC Arrangement with major stakeholders (as specified in IAF/ILAC A2) take the following steps before accepting the application:
- a. Enquire if the applicant is aware of the domestic accreditation body.
 - b. Suggest that accreditation provided by a domestic accreditation body would better take account of local factors and conditions, where relevant.
 - c. Point out the equivalence of the domestic accreditation body's accreditations as demonstrated through the ILAC Arrangement.
 - d. Point out that, according to the principles in part 3 of this document, and even if the application is accepted, the local accreditation body may be involved in the accreditation process.
- 2.3** The foreign accreditation body should proceed with the application only if the applicant persists in requiring accreditation by the foreign accreditation body.

3. COOPERATION WITH THE DOMESTIC ACCREDITATION BODY

- 3.1** The foreign accreditation body shall seek acceptance from the applicant before consulting with the domestic accreditation body.

- 3.2** When an accreditation body that is a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement decides to provide accreditation services outside its country (economy), it should ensure that appropriate assessors are used, taking into account factors such as language, local laws and regulations, culture, etc., as well as technical competence requirements. The foreign accreditation body should also consult the domestic accreditation body and take into consideration any relevant accreditation requirements that the domestic accreditation body has set to suit the local conditions.
- 3.3** The preferred ILAC approach to ensure access to relevant competence is to cooperate to the greatest extent practicable with the domestic accreditation body by using its personnel, as appropriate, on the assessment team.
- 3.4** If it is not possible to include personnel from the domestic accreditation body on the assessment team, cooperation with the domestic accreditation body should be extended to invite the domestic accreditation body to observe the assessment, subject to acceptance by the applicant.
- 3.5** Where the domestic accreditation body is not a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement, or where the scope of the domestic accreditation body does not cover the requested activity, the foreign accreditation body should try to cooperate with the domestic accreditation body according to these principles so as to provide the domestic accreditation body with the opportunity to gain experience to apply for the ILAC Arrangement.
- 3.6** The principles for cooperation among ILAC member bodies stated in this document also apply for reassessment and surveillance activities performed by an accreditation body outside its country (economy).
- 3.7** In all cases, the objective of an eventual change, with the accreditation moving to the relevant domestic accreditation body, should be borne in mind when the domestic accreditation body becomes a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement for the relevant scope, or when the applicant laboratory or inspection body so chooses.