2017

AFRAC MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA)

AFRICAN ACCREDITATION COOPERATION

The document establishes and states the general policies governing AFRAC's Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

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This document has been prepared by the AFRAC MRA Committee.

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1. PREAMBLE

The African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) is an organisation of accreditation bodies that accredit calibration laboratories, testing laboratories, medical laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies within Africa.

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (hereinafter referred to as the MRA) for testing, medical and calibration laboratories, certification and inspection body accreditation. The Arrangement is a means by which the Signatories to the AFRAC MRA for testing, medical, calibration, certification and inspection can recognise one another's technical competence and confidence in the results of the accredited organisations. This MRA is an effort to enhance the objective of free trade within Africa and building up confidence among accreditation bodies in the region.

The criteria for the operation of accredited testing and calibration laboratories are specified in ISO/IEC 17025, for accredited medical laboratories in ISO 15189, for accredited certification bodies in ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17021-1, and for accredited inspection bodies in ISO/IEC 17020. The criteria for the operation of accreditation bodies are specified in ISO/IEC 17011 and in AFRAC, IAF and ILAC mandatory documents.

The principal elements for establishing confidence among the participating accreditation bodies within AFRAC 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 AFRAC MRA Members and their accredited organisations. The elements are:

1.1 Exchange of information on the development and operation of accreditation programs of AFRAC Members;

1.2 Participation in the work and decision making of the AFRAC General Assembly and AFRAC Committees where applicable;

1.3 Exchange of persons taking part in peer evaluations, re-assessments or surveillance visits to accreditation bodies;

1.4 Evaluations of applicants and re-evaluations of signatories to this Arrangement conducted in accordance with the relevant AFRAC and joint IAF/ILAC documents;

1.5 Participation in the work of AFRAC Sub-committees, working groups and task forces held to discuss problems related to testing, calibration, certification and inspection in various technical fields;

1.6 Observations of assessments undertaken by applicant accreditation bodies and MRA signatories, where it will be determined whether their customers meet the requirements of the relevant accreditation standards for conformity assessment bodies;

1.7 Confidence in the metrology institutes which underpin the traceability claims of the laboratories and inspection bodies (where applicable) accredited by the Arrangement signatories and support for the measurement comparison activities of CIPM (Comité International des Poids et Mesures) and/or regional metrology organisations.

1.8 Participation in AFRAC and other interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs where applicable.

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

2. MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA)

2.1 This MRA is based on the results of the evaluations carried out in accordance with the relevant standards, rules, policies and procedures contained in the AFRAC **M001: Policies and Procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies**.

2.2 Each accreditation body signatory to this MRA will follow the applicable terms and conditions defined in **M001: Policies and Procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies**:

- Maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011, ILAC and/or IAF requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents;
- Ensure that accredited calibration and testing laboratories comply with ISO/IEC 17025 and any related ILAC requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents;
- Ensure that accredited medical laboratories comply with ISO 15189 and any related ILAC requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents;
- Ensure that accredited Quality Management System (QMS), Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) certification bodies comply with ISO/IEC 17021-1, and any related IAF requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents;
- Ensure that accredited inspection bodies comply with ISO/IEC 17020, and any related ILAC requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents.

2.3 Each Signatory shall:

2.3.1 Recognise the operation of other relevant accreditation systems as equivalent to its own as specified in the scope of the respective MRA.

2.3.2 Recommend and promote the acceptance of the certificates and reports issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by the other Signatories as being equal with those of its own accredited laboratories and/or certification and inspection bodies.

2.3.3 Investigate all complaints initiated by a Signatory resulting from certificates or reports issued by the conformity assessment bodies accredited by its accreditation programs.

2.3.4 Notify the Secretariat without delay of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur regarding its office address, status, in the operational practices of its system or in its accreditation programs.

2.3.5 Contribute to the work of the MRA Council as appropriate.

2.3.6 Participate in the meetings of the Committees, sub-committees and/or working groups of AFRAC as appropriate.

2.3.7 Provide evaluators for the peer evaluation and re-evaluation of accreditation bodies.

2.3.8 Cooperate with other accreditation bodies so that the MRA may be extended to include other accreditation bodies in the African region.

2.3.9 Use all information in a confidential and professional manner.

2.4 In order to join the AFRAC MRA, an accreditation body will be evaluated in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures defined in **M001: Policies and Procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies** and will sign the Certificate (attached).

2.5 The scope of recognition of a Signatory may be extended or reduced in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures.

2.6 If a Signatory wishes to withdraw from the MRA, that body shall notify the AFRAC MRA Committee in writing, no later than three months in advance of withdrawing. The MRA Committee will notify other Signatory Bodies. Upon withdrawal of a body, that body's Signature Sheet shall be withdrawn.

2.7 In the event of the AFRAC MRA Council making an adverse decision or finding for an applicant or a Signatory the procedures defined in **M001** shall apply.

2.8 Any amendment of the text of the MRA shall be approved by the AFRAC General Assembly.

2.9 It is recognised and accepted by each of the Signatories that this MRA does not create any rights, liabilities or obligations that would have a binding effect in national or international law.

2.10 This MRA consists of eleven (11) Clauses and the Annex that each Signatory signs, along with the scope of its accreditation programs.

2.11 This MRA will come into effect upon signature of the affected parties.

The scope of participation of a Signatory to the AFRAC MRA currently covers:

- *Calibration laboratories;*
- *Testing laboratories;*
- *Medical laboratories;*
- *Quality Management System (QMS) certification bodies;*
- *Environmental Management System (EMS) certification bodies;*
- *Food Safety Management System (FSMS) certification bodies; and*
- *Inspection Bodies.*

ANNEX A

Be it known that the

Accreditation Body Name (ACRONYM)

Has been accepted as a Member of the

African Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement

For

Scope and Date: Calibration ISO/IEC 17025 – *Day-Month-Year*
Testing – ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 - *Day-Month-Year*
Inspection ISO/IEC 17020 - *Day-Month-Year*

Main Scopes: Management Systems Certification – ISO/IEC 17021-1 - *Day-Month-Year*
Sub-scopes: Quality Management Systems Certification – ISO 9001 - *Day-Month-Year*

The Member on behalf of which this sheet is signed is committed to complying with the requirements and obligation of the AFRAC MRA Members.

AB Representative **AB Name**	**Name** **AFRAC Chair**	**Name** **AFRAC MRA Council Chair**

Approved by the AFRAC MRA Council in (Place) on (Date)
Signed in (Place) on (Date)

APPENDIX A: AMENDMENT RECORD

Proposed by	Section	Change
AFRAC MRA members and MRA Documents working group	Pg 2	Details of AFRAC secretariat changed
	1	1st Par: Added "medical laboratories" 2nd Par: Added "medical" 3rd Par: "Clinical" changed to "medical"; ISO/IEC Guide 65 changed to ISO/IEC 17065; deleted reference to ISO/IEC 17024; ISO/IEC 17021 changed to ISO/IEC 17021-1 "…and in AFRAC, IAF and ILAC mandatory documents. "replaced "…and in IAF and ILAC requirements, which are supplemented by AFRAC application documents."
	1.6	"the relevant accreditation standards for conformity assessment bodies" replaced "ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 15189, ISO/IEC 17020, or the relevant Certification standards e.g. ISO/IEC 17021, ISO 17024, or other standards for conformity assessment bodies that AFRAC deems to be suitable for accreditation; and"
	2.1	Deleted "and IAF/ILAC A series documents'
	2.2	Deleted 5th bullet point "Ensure that certification bodies for certification of products, services and supplies comply with ISO/IEC 17065 and any related IAF requirements and the applicable AFRAC documents;" Deleted "(and the documents that replace it) in all bullet points of clause 2.2 2nd bullet: Added "calibration and testing" 3rd bullet: Split from 2nd bullet point, deleted "clinical or" 4th bullet point replaced "Ensure that all accredited certification bodies for Quality Management System (QMS) and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) comply with ISO/IEC 17021 (and the documents that replace it), certification bodies for product comply with ISO/IEC Guide 65 (and the documents that replace it) and any related IAF requirements and the relevant AFRAC applicable documents; 5th bullet point "deleted "and IAF"
	2.3.4	Secretariat replaced MRA Council
	2.5	Deleted "following re-evaluation"
	2.11	Deleted 7th bulletin point "products, processes or services certification bodies; and"
	Page 6	"AFRAC MRA Council Chair" replaced "AFRAC MRA Committee Chair"