

2016

AFRAC QUALITY MANUAL

AFRICAN ACCREDITATION COOPERATION

The Quality Manual establishes and states the general policies governing AFRAC's Management System. These policies define AFRAC's operations and activities in accordance with the requirements of the guidance and mandatory documents from the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 The African Accreditation Cooperation's (AFRAC) Quality Manual establishes and states the general policies governing AFRAC's Management System. These policies define AFRAC's operations and activities in accordance with the requirements of the guidance and mandatory documents from the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

2. OVERVIEW OF AFRAC

2.1 AFRAC is a cooperation of accreditation bodies that accredit laboratories, certification and inspection bodies, Proficiency Testing (PT) Providers and reference material producers and defined stakeholders in the African region. Its current geographic reach is within the African continent.

2.2 AFRAC was established in 2010 and is recognised by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) as a Regional Accreditation Cooperation.

2.3 The AFRAC General Assembly (GA) is AFRAC's highest authority.

2.4 The MRA Council makes decisions regarding the status of Membership to the AFRAC MRA, including the granting, maintenance, suspension and withdrawal from the MRA.

2.5 The AFRAC Executive Committee (EXCO) is responsible for the implementation of AFRAC's objectives and day-to-day management of AFRAC, and operates according to its GA approved Terms of Reference.

2.6 The AFRAC Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day management of AFRAC and supports the General Assembly, MRA Committee, MRA Council, Technical Committee and the EXCO.

3. STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Vision

To be the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) that is recognised by the African Union Commission (AUC) as well as internationally and which is also accepted by AU Member States for serving the African economy and society.

At the AU Conference of Ministers of Industry (CAMI) held from 10 – 14 June 2013, the Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (AFRAC, AFRIMETS, ARSO and AFSEC) was recognised as the continental platform for all matters related to standardisation, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment in order to strengthen the competitiveness of Africa's goods and services and contribute towards the industrialisation of the continent and its sustainability.

3.2 Mission

To facilitate the use of accreditation as a tool to support trade and industrial development, improve competitiveness of African products and enhance the protection of the health and safety of the public and the environment.

3.3 Quality Policy

3.3.1 To support trade facilitation in the region through the establishment of an effective and accepted Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA).

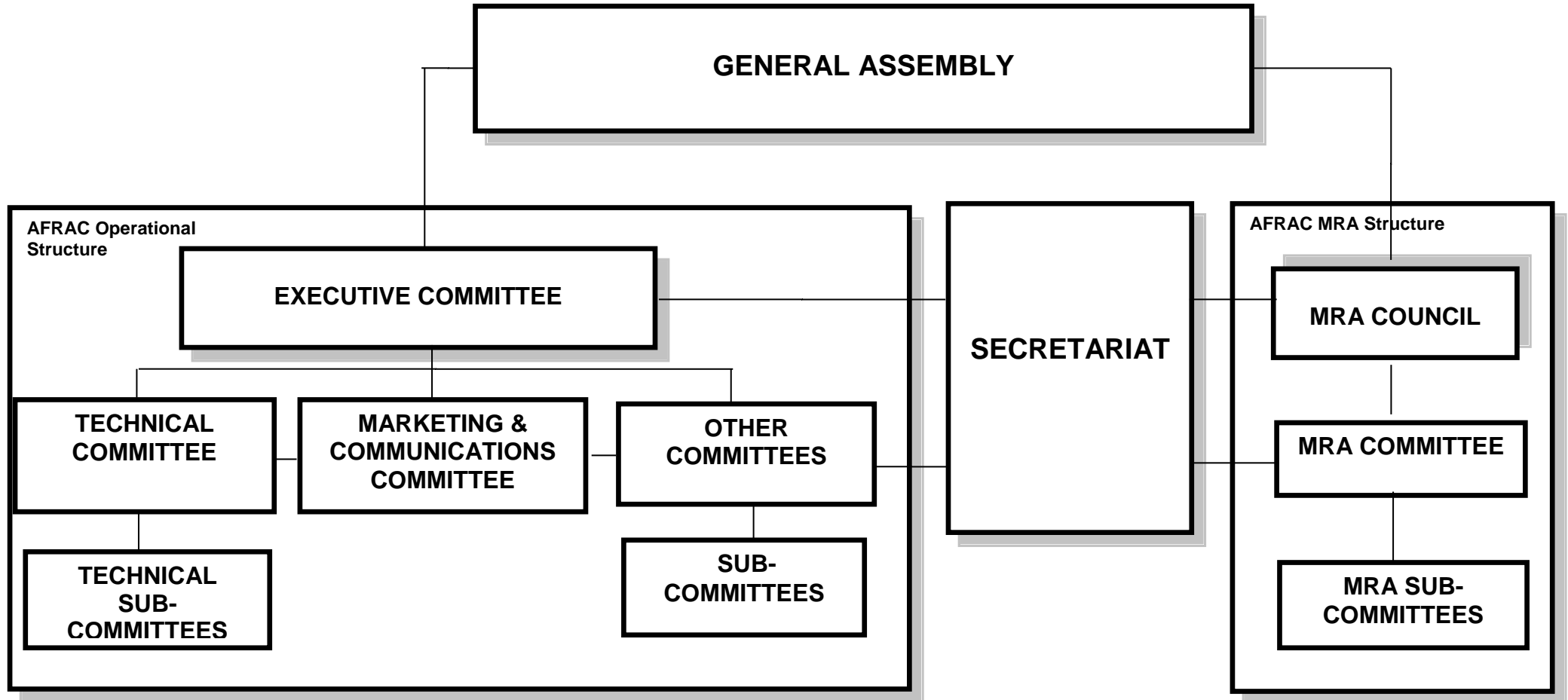
- 3.3.2 To facilitate the recognition and acceptance of conformity assessment certificates and reports worldwide.
- 3.3.3 To improve the competitiveness of African goods and services.
- 3.3.4 To facilitate health and safety of the public and the environment.

3.4 Functions

- 3.4.1 Fostering collaboration among accreditation bodies in Africa and facilitating collaboration between Member States having accreditation bodies and those without;
- 3.4.2 Assisting and supporting the establishment of national or multi-economy accreditation bodies in Africa without compromising AFRAC's impartiality;
- 3.4.3 Creation and maintenance of a system for the recognition of accreditation bodies in Africa within the framework of and consistent with global MRA/MLA international requirements;
- 3.4.4 Coordination and facilitation of liaison with other regional and international organizations concerned with accreditation such as International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), Asian Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and European Accreditation (EA);
- 3.4.5 Representation of Africa in international accreditation and other quality infrastructure *fora*;
- 3.4.6 Promotion and expansion of the recognition and acceptance of the MRA in Africa internationally in both the voluntary and regulatory areas;
- 3.4.7 Development of and managing training and technical assistance programs for transferring expertise and technical information, sharing of information and activities identified to assist new or developing accreditation programs, among present and potential members;
- 3.4.8 Harmonisation of accreditation practices within Africa in compliance with international requirements;
- 3.4.9 Establishment of an information system such as a database on accreditation bodies, Proficiency Testing (PT) schemes and qualified technical assessors, etc.;
- 3.4.10 Finding ways to reduce costs incurred by African accreditation bodies associated with obtaining and maintaining full membership to ILAC/IAF, in particular pre-peer and peer evaluation processes.

4. AFRAC STRUCTURE

4.1 AFRAC's organisational structure is made up of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, a Chair, a Treasurer, MRA Council, a Secretariat, Committees, sub-committees and Working Groups.



5. FINANCES

- 5.1 AFRAC is intended to be a self-funding cooperation. To this end, AFRAC's financial viability is a shared responsibility amongst Members.
- 5.2 The direct income that is envisaged to cover AFRAC's operational costs will come from:
- 5.2.1 Annual Membership fees;
 - 5.2.2 Peer Evaluation Fees (*charged at cost to the organisation being evaluated*);
 - 5.2.3 Projects;
 - 5.2.4 Development Partner Contributions; and
 - 5.2.5 Training.
- 5.3 Each year the Treasurer, on behalf of the EXCO will propose to the General Assembly a draft budget for the coming calendar year.
- 5.4 AFRAC's fees are approved by the General Assembly and formalised in a documented fee structure and are subject to change from year to year according to the General Assembly's approved formula.
- 5.5 The Secretariat and Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that all fees are charged according to the documented fee structure.
- 5.6 Failure to pay fees by the stipulated date may result in the cancellation or withdrawal of Membership.
- 5.7 An annual financial report is provided to the General Assembly by the Treasurer at each meeting of the General Assembly.
- 5.8 AFRAC's financial year is from January to December.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

AFRAC operates according to a five year Strategic Planning cycle, which defines the priorities and strategic direction of AFRAC. The AFRAC Strategic Plan A006 is available on the AFRAC website.

7. DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES

The delegation register depicted below, lists the delegated activities identified according to the AFRAC Bylaws Clause number, the responsible person/body, and the person/body to which the activity is delegated.

Activity	Responsibility	Delegation	Bylaws Clause
Define and/or approve the policies and strategic plan of AFRAC.	General Assembly (GA)	EXCO to implement AFRAC policies (including financial affairs) and manage them between meetings of the GA as directed by GA.	Clause 9.4.3 Clause 13.4.1
Decisions on the AFRAC's budget and supervision of other financial matters.	GA	EXCO for approval of specific funding requests that fit within budget already approved by the GA.	Clause 9.4.11 Clause 13.4.1 Clause 14.5.8
Endorsement of appointment of AFRAC committee members.	EXCO	AFRAC Committee Chairs.	Clause 13.4.5 Clause 13.4.6

Activity	Responsibility	Delegation	Bylaws Clause
Execution of decisions taken by the AFRAC General Assembly and Executive.	AFRAC Chair	AFRAC Chair may delegate some activities to the AFRAC Secretariat or a member of the EXCO.	Clause 12.2.1.2 Clause 12.2.1.8
Acting on behalf of AFRAC between meetings of the General Assembly.	AFRAC Chair, EXCO and Secretariat.	AFRAC Chair some activities may be delegated to a member of the Executive or a GA delegate.	Clause 12.2.1.5 Clause 13.2 Clause 13.4.1 Clause 14.1
Promoting the interests of AFRAC.	AFRAC Chair and EXCO.	AFRAC Chair some activities may be delegated to a member of the Executive or a GA delegate.	Clause 12.2.1.5 Clause 13.4.2
Monitoring of income and expenditure.	AFRAC Treasurer	Day-to-day oversight may be delegated to the AFRAC Secretariat.	Clause 14.5.4 Clause 14.5.8
Decisions regarding Membership.	AFRAC MRA Council	Decisions regarding the status of Membership to the AFRAC MRA.	Clause 15.10

8. DOCUMENT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

8.1 Document Management

8.1.1 All AFRAC documentation will be developed, maintained and controlled in accordance with the AFRAC Document Control Procedure P003, to ensure that documents are properly drafted, identified, classified, revised and approved in a manner which is consistent with the procedure.

8.1.2 The Secretariat, AFRAC Committees and Working Groups are responsible for ensuring that the AFRAC Document Control Procedure is adhered to when producing a new AFRAC document or revising an existing document.

8.2 Records Management

8.2.1 All AFRAC records pertaining to the AFRAC Management System as well as the AFRAC MRA and its processes will be managed, stored and recorded in accordance with the relevant AFRAC Records Management Procedure.

8.2.2 The AFRAC Secretariat is responsible for all AFRAC records in accordance with the relevant AFRAC Records Management Procedure.

9. MANAGEMENT REVIEW

9.1 The Management Review ensures the achievement of AFRAC's objectives, the development of the Strategic Plan, and the proper operation and improvement of AFRAC's management system.

9.2 The AFRAC Executive Committee (EXCO) shall review AFRAC's Management System at one of its meetings annually, and the agenda for that meeting shall include Management Review.

9.3 The Management Review is carried out by the AFRAC EXCO according to the AFRAC Management Review Procedure.

9.4 The AFRAC Management Review Procedure P006 outlines the management review procedures to be used.

10. INTERNAL AUDITS

10.1 In order to ensure compliance to the AFRAC Management System, as well as effective implementation of its policies and procedures, AFRAC will schedule and conduct internal audits at least once every two years.

10.2 The EXCO may at its discretion obtain the services of an external consultant to perform an independent audit. The audit is performed against this Quality Manual, AFRAC's Procedures as well as the appropriate international requirements as listed below:

10.2.1 ILAC/IAF A1 - Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements for Evaluation of a Regional Group.

10.2.2 ILAC/IAF A2 – Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body.

10.2.3 ILAC P1 – ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement: Requirements for Evaluation of Accreditation Bodies by ILAC recognised Regional Cooperations.

10.2.4 ILAC P2 – ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement: Procedures for the Evaluation of Regional Cooperation Bodies for the Purpose of Recognition.

10.2.5 AFRAC M001 – AFRAC Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining the AFRAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Amongst Accreditation Bodies.

10.3 The procedures for conducting internal audits may be found in the AFRAC Internal Audit Procedure P007 which establishes the requirements to present, perform and check the results of corrective actions resulting from internal audit.

11. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

11.1 All Complaints and Appeals against AFRAC are managed and resolved according to the AFRAC Appeals and Complaints Procedure P002.

12. CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

12.1 Corrective action requests can result from Management Reviews, Internal Audits, Complaints and Appeals.

12.2 The steps to take corrective and preventive actions are described in the relevant AFRAC Procedures established by AFRAC, as well as within this Quality Manual.

12.3 If any activities lead to corrective and preventive actions resulting from sources other than the above, the AFRAC Secretariat will record them and submit them to the AFRAC Chair who will be appointed to monitor these actions until their closure.

13. MEMBERSHIP

13.1 General

- 13.1.1 An applicant must satisfy AFRAC that it complies with all AFRAC requirements for the applicable category of Membership.
- 13.1.2 An application form for either Arrangement, Full, Associate or Stakeholder Membership may be obtained from the Secretariat, and must be duly completed, with the requested additional information attached.

13.2 Membership Admission

- 13.2.1 The admission of Full, Associate and Stakeholder Members is performed in accordance with the AFRAC Membership Admission Procedure P001.
- 13.2.2 The admission of Arrangement Members is performed in accordance with the AFRAC Policies and Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining the AFRAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Amongst Accreditation Bodies M001.

13.3 Suspension and Termination of Membership

- 13.3.1 The Executive Committee may provisionally suspend Full, Associate and Stakeholder Members for conduct contrary to the best interest of AFRAC and/or in terms of Clause 7.1.1 of the AFRAC Bylaws, and thereafter make a recommendation to the General Assembly for a final suspension in the next meeting of the General Assembly immediately following the provisional suspension of a Member.
- 13.3.2 A Full, Associate or Stakeholder Member may only be finally suspended by the General Assembly by a decision of a two-thirds majority of the votes of the Full and Arrangement Members present in person or by proxy.
- 13.3.3 The Executive Committee shall manage the suspension process of Full, Associate and Stakeholder Members according to the relevant procedure.
- 13.3.4 Full, Associate and Stakeholder Membership may be terminated on a Member's own decision by written resignation which must be sent to the Secretariat.
- 13.3.5 Full, Associate and Stakeholder Membership may also be terminated by a two-third majority vote of the Full and Arrangement Members, for conduct contrary to the best interests of AFRAC.
- 13.3.6 Any Member whose membership has been terminated remains liable to pay AFRAC any fees due and payable but unpaid at the date of termination, and also has the right to appeal in accordance with the AFRAC Appeals and Complaints Procedure P002.

13.4 Suspension and Termination of Arrangement Membership

- 13.4.1 The MRA Council may suspend Arrangement Members for conduct contrary to the best interest of AFRAC and its MRA and/or in terms of Clause 19 of the AFRAC Bylaws.
- 13.4.2 The Arrangement Members are finally suspended by a decision of a two-thirds majority of the votes of other Arrangement Members in the MRA Council meetings.
- 13.4.3 The MRA Council shall manage the suspension and termination process of Arrangement Members according to the relevant AFRAC procedure.

14. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS FOR AFRAC AND AFRAC MRA SIGNATORIES

The extensive list of recommended ILAC and IAF documents are available as on the AFRAC website under Mandatory Publications.

15. AFRAC COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 15.1 The AFRAC General Assembly is entitled to set up all Committees. These Committees shall be established to carry out the objectives, aims and tasks of AFRAC in an appropriate manner.
- 15.2 All AFRAC Committees shall have defined terms of reference and working programs that shall be approved by the General Assembly.
- 15.3 All Committees shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair elected by the General Assembly, preferably amongst its delegates. The procedure shall be the same as for the election of the Chair, except that nominations may be accepted on the day of the meeting of the General Assembly. The term of office of a Committee Chair and Vice-Chair shall be two years, and they may be re-elected.
- 15.4 The Committee Members shall be nominated by their respective AFRAC delegates and appointed by the Chairs of the relevant Committees, unless otherwise determined in the terms of reference of the Committee in question.
- 15.5 All AFRAC Committees shall report to the General Assembly at least annually and shall keep the Secretariat informed of their activities by providing the Secretariat with agendas, resolutions, membership lists and minutes of meetings.
- 15.6 The AFRAC Committees may either be established to deal with specific tasks or tasks of a permanent nature.
- 15.7 AFRAC Committees may establish their own sub-Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces, and these shall have corresponding Terms of Reference approved by the relevant Committee to which it reports.
- 15.8 The conveners of the Working Groups and Task Forces, as well as and Chairs of sub-Committees shall be appointed by the relevant Committee Chairs and the term of office for conveners and sub-Committee Chairs shall be two years, and they may be re-elected.
- 15.9 The AFRAC Committee Chairs and the conveners of the Working Groups and Task Forces may invite other experts to participate in the work of the body in question.
- 15.10 The MRA Council makes decisions regarding the status of Membership to the AFRAC MRA, including the granting, maintenance, suspension and withdrawal from the MRA, and is comprised of one representative of each signatory to the AFRAC MRA.

16. AFRAC MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA)

- 16.1 The AFRAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) M002 document describes the elements of the MRA in order to ensure it's correct and appropriate implementation.
- 16.2 The MRA is based on results from evaluations carried out according to the AFRAC Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining a Mutual Recognition Agreement among Accreditation Bodies M001.

17. SELECTION, TRAINING, QUALIFICATION AND MONITORING OF PEER EVALUATORS

- 17.1 In order to ensure that the peer evaluators have the necessary qualifications, experience and competence to carry out assessments and recommend the inclusion of a new member to the AFRAC MRA, the process to select, train, qualify and monitor peer evaluators is established in the AFRAC Selection, Training, Qualification and Monitoring the Performance of Peer Evaluators Procedure P011, and the AFRAC Mutual Recognition Agreement among Accreditation Bodies Procedure M001.
- 17.2 All documentation relating to the Peer Evaluation of Members is kept on file as long as the organisation remains a Member of AFRAC.
- 17.3 The Secretariat shall have an electronic file for each organisation. The files shall be stored securely with restricted access.
- 17.4 Files relating to organisations that have withdrawn their membership or had their Membership revoked are reviewed by AFRAC six years after the change of status. The EXCO decides whether the file should be destroyed or retained for a longer period.
- 17.5 The Secretariat and Committee Chairs are responsible for filing all correspondence specific to their functions. The Secretariat maintains a record of each Lead, Technical and Expert Evaluator, detailing their training and the evaluations done by them. It also contains copies of the Team Leader's evaluation of their performance.

18. CONFIDENTIALITY

18.1 Arrangements for ensuring confidentiality of Peer Evaluation information

- 18.1.1 Peer Evaluators are required to protect the confidential nature of the information regarding the evaluation process and to be impartial at all times. This declaration is formally stated and described in the AFRAC Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality F006-01.

19. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 19.1 It may occur that during AFRAC EXCO, MRA Committee and MRA Council meetings there may be a need to decide on a matter on which a member of may have a conflict of interest. The person affected must declare this conflict of interest, and this shall be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting. The affected person may be asked by the meeting Chair to excuse themselves from the meeting room, while the particular issue is being discussed.
- 19.2 It is required that EXCO, MRA Committee and MRA Council Members state any conflict of interest with a particular agenda item, and this shall be a standing agenda item for all EXCO, MRA Committee and MRA Council meetings.

20. PUBLIC ACCESS TO AFRAC INFORMATION

20.1 AFRAC Web site

- 20.1.1 AFRAC's website can be found at www.intra-afrac.com or www.intra-afrac.org
- 20.1.2 The AFRAC website has an open public section and a "Members Only" section.
- 20.1.3 The Member of each organisation is given a personal username and password to enter the website.

20.1.4 Each AFRAC Committee is provided with a generic Committee username and password, through the Chair.

20.1.5 It is the responsibility of the Committee Chairs to manage the use and confidentiality of that information.

20.1.6 The AFRAC Secretariat manages the website and is responsible for assigning usernames and passwords.

20.1.7 AFRAC has a contract with a website service provider in accordance with the required safety, privacy and confidentiality policies and rules established by AFRAC that guarantees its proper and continuous function.

20.2 AFRAC Newsletter

20.2.1 The following publications are distributed by AFRAC on a regular basis:

- The AFRAC Newsletter (also available on the web page).

APPENDIX A: AMENDMENT RECORD

Proposed by	Section	Change
Secretariat	Appendix A	Inclusion of an Amendment Record.
Secretariat	2.1	Included "Proficiency Testing Providers".
Secretariat	2.2	AFRAC was established in 2010 and is recognised by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) as a Regional Accreditation Cooperation. Deleted and is the in process of concluding a Technical Cooperation Agreement with APLAC".
Secretariat	2.6	Included "MRA Committee, MRA Council, Technical Committee"; Deleted Administrative Committee.
Secretariat	3.1	Included: At the AU Conference of Ministers of Industry (CAMI) held from 10 – 14 June 2013, the Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (AFRAC, AFRIMETS, ARSO and AFSEC) were recognised as the continental platform for all matters related to standardisation, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment in order to strengthen the competitiveness of Africa's goods and services and contribute towards the industrialisation of the continent and its sustainability.
Secretariat	3.4.2	Included: "Without compromising AFRAC's impartiality".
Secretariat	14.	Deleted ILAC/IAF A4, and included that the applicable ILAC and IAF documents are available on the AFRAC website.
Secretariat	17.3	Deleted "And its Membership number".
Secretariat	19.1	Added "EXCO, MRA Committee and MRA Council".
Secretariat	19.2	Added "EXCO, MRA Committee and MRA Council".
Secretariat	4.	Amended the AFRAC Organogram by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deleting the "Administrative Committee" and replacing them with "Other Committees"; - Added the Marketing and Communications Committee to the structure; - Added Sub-Committees beneath Other Committees; - Added Sub-Committees beneath the MRA Committee.
Secretariat	5.8	Added a new 5.8 "AFRAC's financial year is from January to December".
Secretariat	6.	Deleted "once approved in October 2012, will be enforced".
Secretariat	8.1.2	Deleted "Management" and replaced with "Control".
Secretariat	8.2	Added "8.2 Records Management".
Secretariat	8.2.1	All AFRAC records pertaining to the AFRAC Management System as well as the AFRAC MRA and its processes will be managed, stored and recorded in accordance with the relevant AFRAC Records Management Procedure.
Secretariat	8.2.2	The AFRAC Secretariat is responsible for all AFRAC records in accordance with the relevant AFRAC Records Management Procedure.
Secretariat	10.1	Added "two years" and deleted "at least once annually".
Secretariat	13.2.1	Added "of".
Secretariat	13.2.2	Deleted "Arrangement Member Procedure P004" and added "M001".
Secretariat	14.	Deleted Table containing ILAC and IAF documents, and replaced with "The extensive list of recommended ILAC and IAF documents are available as on the AFRAC website under Mandatory Publications.
Secretariat	15.1	Deleted "Constituent Bodies" and replaced with "Committees".

Proposed by	Section	Change
Secretariat	15.2	Deleted “endorsed” and replaced with “approved”.
Secretariat	20.1.7	Deleted “the” and replaced with “a”.
Secretariat	20.2.1	Deleted the first bullet “The AFRAC Annual Report is published annually and distributed to all Members and interested parties”. Deleted “bi-annual” from “the AFRAC Newsletter (also available on the web page)”.