

Selection, Qualification and Monitoring of APAC Peer Evaluators

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**AUTHORSHIP**

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1. **Introduction**

This document defines the procedures that the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (APAC) uses to select, train, qualify and monitor the peer evaluators and technical experts. Peer evaluators and technical experts undertake peer evaluation of accreditation bodies who participate in the APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

The APAC MRA Council is responsible for the planning and delivery of mutual recognition on behalf of APAC. The Council needs to be confident that its evaluators are competent to perform peer evaluations and that any of their recommendations arising from such evaluations can be accepted with confidence. Reassurance is also needed that evaluators can conduct evaluations in an objective, impartial manner and are able to communicate effectively with the accreditation bodies under evaluation and through the reports they prepare for both the accreditation bodies and the APAC MRA Council.

The APAC MRA Management Committee (MRA MC) is responsible for the selection, training, qualification and monitoring of peer evaluators on behalf of MRA Council.

1. **References**

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

APAC MRA-001 Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual Recognition amongst APAC Accreditation Bodies

APAC MRA-002 APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement

APAC MRA-003 APAC MRA Council – Rules for its Operation

APAC FMRA-004 Peer Evaluator Nomination Form

APAC FMRA-007 Evaluation Team Leader Performance Monitoring Form

APAC FMRA-008 Peer Evaluator and Technical Expert Performance Monitoring Form

APAC FMRA-009 Evaluator Training Course – Participant Evaluation Form

APAC FMRA-015 Peer Evaluator Competency Spreadsheet

1. **Qualification of a peer evaluator**
   1. **Grades of Peer Evaluator**

APAC has four grades of peer evaluator:

* Provisional Evaluator;
* Evaluator;
* Provisional Lead Evaluator; and
* Lead Evaluator.

In addition to peer evaluators, APAC Technical Experts may be included in a peer evaluation team.

* 1. **Qualification of Peer Evaluators**

**3.2.1 Nominations**

APAC Full and Associate Members wishing to nominate individuals as peer evaluators shall complete APAC FMRA-004 and forward the completed form to the APAC Secretariat.

The APAC Secretariat shall send APAC FMRA-004 to the MRA MC for review and confirmation whether the candidate meets the criteria defined in APAC MRA-004 Appendix 1.

The APAC Secretariat shall update APAC FMRA-015 and inform the results to the candidate.

**3.2.2 Training**

The candidates whose nomination as a peer evaluator has been accepted by the MRA MC shall undertake an APAC peer evaluator training course (see 5.1) or equivalent prior to appointment as a Provisional Evaluator.

The cost of attending the training course shall be borne by the APAC member nominating the candidate. APAC may provide some reimbursement of expenses to candidates attending the training course.

Candidates who attend the training course shall be evaluated by the trainers using APAC FMRA-009.

The trainers shall complete APAC FMRA-009 and discuss the contents with each applicable candidate. The form shall be submitted to the APAC Secretariat within 30 days of the training course.

APAC FMRA-009 shall be considered by the MRA MC when making judgement as to whether the candidate can be qualified as a Provisional Evaluator.

**3.2.3 Competence Criteria of Peer Evaluators**

**3.2.3.1 Provisional Evaluator**

The Provisional Evaluator shall be:

(a) an individual who meets the requirements for Candidate Peer Evaluation Team Member as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1; and

(b) be an experienced person or assessor, within his/her accreditation body or similar organisation, who has relevant working experience in accreditation and the appropriate technical background in the assigned areas of the evaluation (at least 3 years);

**3.2.3.2 Evaluator**

(a) An Evaluator is an individual who meets the criteria for Peer Evaluator Team Member as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2, Annex 1.

(b) To be promoted from a Provisional Evaluator to Evaluator, the Provisional Evaluator shall participate in a minimum of one peer evaluation under the supervision of a Lead Evaluator, receive a positive recommendation from the Lead Evaluator in APAC FMRA-008 and be accepted by the MRA MC.

If an individual holds Evaluator status in one program, there is no need for that individual to serve as a Provisional Evaluator in other programs providing the individual satisfies all other prerequisites for the additional program into which the individual seeks appointment.

**3.2.3.3 Provisional Lead Evaluator**

1. A Provisional Lead Evaluator is an individual who meets the requirements of Peer Evaluator Team Leader as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1, has received a positive on-site recommendation from a Lead Evaluator in APAC FMRA-007 and has been accepted by the MRA MC.
2. To be promoted from an Evaluator to a Provisional Lead Evaluator, the Evaluator shall participate in at least two peer evaluations as an Evaluator.

**3.2.3.4 Lead Evaluator**

(a) A Lead Evaluator is an individual who meets the requirements of Peer Evaluator Team Leader as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1.

(b) To be promoted from a Provisional Lead Evaluator to a Lead Evaluator, the Provisional Lead Evaluator shall participate as a Lead Evaluator under the supervision of a Lead Evaluator, in a minimum of one peer evaluation, receive a positive recommendation from the supervising Lead Evaluator in APAC FMRA-007 and be accepted by the MRA MC.

**3.2.3.5 Technical Experts**

A Technical Expert is an individual that satisfies the Level 4 requirements of APAC MRA-004 Appendix 1 where applicable, or otherwise as a minimum, satisfies the Level 3 requirements, and has been accepted by the MRA MC.

1. **Monitoring peer evaluator performance**
   1. **Performance Review**

The evaluation Team Leader is responsible for the effective conduct of the peer evaluation. They are also responsible for monitoring the performance of each of the members of their peer evaluation team.

The Team Leader shall complete an APAC FMRA-008 and return the completed form to the APAC Secretariat after the evaluation within one month of the completion of the onsite portion of the peer evaluation and be accepted by the MRA MC.

Should the performance of any team member be considered to be unsatisfactory, or there are training or development needs proposed for an evaluator, the MRA MC shall discreetly consult with the relevant evaluator on the areas of performance that may require improvement. The MRA MC may suspend an individual’s peer evaluator status at any time based on a review of performance. The MRA MC may terminate an individual’s peer evaluator status in the following circumstances:

1. where the performance of an evaluator has brought APAC, ILAC or IAF into disrepute;
2. where an evaluator is unwilling to accept a proposal to improve performance (e.g. re-training);
3. where there is on-going poor performance in spite of improvement initiatives.

To monitor the performance of Team Leaders, each MRA signatory or applicant shall be asked to complete the Peer Evaluation Feedback Form (APAC FMRA-006) with comments on the performance of the evaluation team, and particularly of the Team Leader. This form shall be sent by the APAC Secretariat to the accreditation body following the MRA Council ballot of the results of the peer evaluation.

* 1. Maintenance of Peer Evaluator Status

To maintain peer evaluator status, the peer evaluator shall participate in evaluations, evaluators’ meetings, and/or other activities organized by ILAC, IAF or other recognized regions.

If a peer evaluator does not participate in any peer evaluation or any evaluator training activity for 3 years, his/her qualification shall be reviewed by the MRA MC so as to determine:

* + 1. whether qualification shall be maintained, needs to be changed to another grade or be suspended; and/or
    2. whether any training is required.

1. **Training Activities for Peer Evaluators**

**5.1 Peer Evaluator Training Course**

5.1.1 Peer evaluator training courses are delivered by the MRA MC. The MRA MC maintains a pool of Evaluator Trainers who meet the following criteria in order to deliver APAC Evaluator Training.

* Lead Evaluators who have led at least two APAC peer evaluations;
* Demonstrated experience in the delivery of facilitated training within their own accreditation body to staff, assessors and CAB staff on accreditation and conformity assessment issues; and,
* Agreement from their accreditation body of this additional duty for their staff member.

5.1.2 The peer evaluator training course shall be provided as deemed necessary by the MRA MC. The MRA MC shall decide on the timing and venue of the training course and appoint an appropriate number of Evaluator Trainers to conduct the training.

5.1.3 Typical elements of the Peer Evaluator Training Course are shown in Appendix 1.

5.1.4 The trainers shall record the Peer Evaluator Training Course and submit the report and Course materials to the APAC Secretariat within 30 days of the completion of the Course.

**5.2 Peer Evaluator Workshop**

5.2.1 Workshops are conducted periodically to provide peer evaluators with on-going training, including in new/revised standards and ILAC, IAF and APAC documents, and to facilitate the harmonisation of evaluation processes.

5.2.2 The MRA MC shall periodically organise a workshop for Lead Evaluators. The MRA MC shall appoint workshop facilitators from the Evaluator Trainers.

5.2.3 The facilitators shall record the outcomes of discussions in the workshop and submit the report and workshop materials to the APAC Secretariat within 30 days of the Workshop.

5.2.4 The APAC Secretariat shall circulate the recorded outcomes and the workshop materials to all Peer Evaluators regardless of their attendance at the Workshop.

5.2.5 All Peer Evaluators shall acknowledge receipt of the documents in writing and shall request clarification of any issue as necessary.

1. AMENDMENT TABLE

This table provides a summary of the changes to the document with this issue.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section(s)** | **Amendment(s)** |
| All | New issue on establishment of APAC. |
| End |  |

APPENDIX 1 – QUALIFICATIONS OF EVALUATORS & TECHNICAL EXPERTS

**1. APAC Lead Evaluators**

1.1 An APAC Lead Evaluator shall be able:

1.1.1 To lead the evaluation in an efficient and effective way, and be able to distribute the evaluation tasks equitably amongst team members;

1.1.2 To evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s), and its accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s);

1.1.3 To organize an evaluation team with an appropriate composition (maximum coverage of scope of the accreditation body and minimum number of members);

1.1.4 To decide from the submitted documentation any areas requiring special examination during the evaluation;

1.1.5 To report clearly and succinctly the findings of all team members, in compliance with APAC MRA-001;

1.1.6 To determine the criticality of the nonconformities, concerns and comments;

1.1.7 To evaluate whether the corrective actions undertaken by the accreditation body are effective;

1.1.8 To adapt quickly and easily to different accreditation cultures.

1.2 In order to meet these criteria, an APAC Lead Evaluator shall:

1.2.1 Be an experienced person, working in an accreditation body or similar organisation, who has relevant accreditation work experience and has an appropriate technical background and experience in assessment activities (at least 5 years);

1.2.2 Have participated as a team member in at least two APAC (or equivalent) evaluations of accreditation bodies;

1.2.3 Have a sound knowledge of the application of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standards and relevant APAC MRA documents;

1.2.4 Be able to understand and to express him/herself clearly in English, in speaking and writing, to the APAC MRA Council;

1.2.5 Have experience in chairing meetings and in reaching consensus on matters of contention;

1.2.6 Have good interpersonal skills.

1.3 The APAC MRA Council shall arrange periodic meetings for Lead Evaluators in order to improve and maintain the harmonization of the evaluations.

**2. APAC Evaluators, Provisional Evaluators and Technical Experts**

2.1 An APAC Evaluator, Provisional Evaluator or Technical Expert shall be able:

2.1.1 For Evaluators and Provisional Evaluators, to evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s) and other APAC application documents;

2.1.2 For all, evaluate whether an accreditation body’s accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s) and other APAC application documents;

2.1.3 To report findings clearly and succinctly in English;

2.1.4 To determine the criticality of the findings.

2.2 An APAC Provisional Evaluator shall:

2.2.1 Be an experienced person or assessor, within his/her accreditation body or similar organisation, who has relevant working experience in accreditation and the appropriate technical background in the assigned areas of the evaluation (at least 3 years);

2.2.2 Have successfully completed an APAC evaluator training course(s), or equivalent;

2.2.3 Have a sound knowledge of the application of appropriate ISO(/IEC) standards, and relevant MRA supplementary requirements;

2.2.4 Have good interpersonal skills;

2.2.5 Be able to be understood and to express him/herself clearly in English;

2.2.6 Follow the instructions given by the team leader.

2.3 In addition to meeting the requirements of clause 2.2 above, an APAC Evaluator shall have participated as an active team member as a Provisional Evaluator for at least one evaluation, and have received a satisfactory report on performance from the evaluation Team Leader.

2.4 An APAC Technical Expert shall:

2.4.1 Be a technical assessor (or equivalent, by whatever title), who has relevant experience in doing assessments, and the appropriate technical background in the assigned areas of the evaluation (at least 3 years);

2.4.2 Have a sound knowledge of the application of appropriate ISO(/IEC) accreditation standards;

2.4.3 Have good interpersonal skills;

2.4.4 Be able to be understood and to express him/herself clearly in English;

2.4.5 Follow the instructions given by the Team Leader.

*NOTE 1: Technical Experts are chosen specifically for their technical expertise when that expertise is not available otherwise to the evaluation team. There shall be no more than one Technical Expert in any evaluation team.*

*NOTE 2: In general, Technical Experts should not be asked to evaluate on their own any aspects of ISO/IEC 17011 other than through the witnessing of assessments or providing specific technical input, e.g. in relation to measurement traceability. They should be closely supervised by the team leader. Exceptions to this may be when a Technical Expert has been previously qualified as an Evaluator / Lead Evaluator, and thus the same restrictions or level of supervision may not be needed. Each case shall be considered on its merits by the Team Leader.*

**3. Evaluator and Technical Expert Attributes**

3.1 Evaluators and Technical Experts should:

3.1.1 Be open minded and mature;

3.1.2 Possess sound judgement, analytical skills, and tenacity;

3.1.3 Have the ability to perceive situations in a realistic way, to understand complex operations from a broad perspective, and to understand the role of individual units within an organisation.

3.2 Evaluators and Technical Experts should be able to apply the attributes of 3.1 in order to:

3.2.1 Obtain and assess objective evidence fairly;

3.2.2 Remain true to the purpose of the evaluation without fear or favour;

3.2.3 Evaluate constantly the effects of evaluation observations and personal interactions during an evaluation;

3.2.4 Treat concerned personnel in a way that will best achieve the evaluation objective;

3.2.5 React with sensitivity to the local conventions of the area in which the evaluation is performed;

3.2.6 Perform the evaluation process without deviating due to distractions;

3.2.7 Commit full attention and support to the evaluation process;

3.2.8 React effectively in stressful situations;

3.2.9 Arrive at generally acceptable conclusions based on evaluation observations;

3.2.10 Remain true to a conclusion despite pressure to change that is not based on evidence.

APPENDIX 2 – TYPICAL ELEMENTS OF AN EVALUATOR TRAINING COURSE

**Typical topic areas**

* Concepts of accreditation and conformity assessment
* Review of ISO/IEC 17011 – key elements; possible “contentious” clauses; IAF/ILAC-A5
* IAF/ILAC-A2 and A3; APAC MRA-001, 002 and 003
* Planning an evaluation, including assignment of tasks
* Evidence gathering, linkage to clauses of ISO/IEC 17011 and other requirements documents (needs to emphasise that findings must be linked to relevant clause of document)
* Report preparation and report writing

**Possible group exercises**

* Evidence needed to evaluate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011
* Planning an evaluation, based on an accreditation body scenario
* Examining the impartiality and related body clauses of ISO/IEC 17011
* Tactics for determining the appropriate evaluation duration and evaluation team composition, based on an accreditation body scenario
* Reporting of findings, classification of findings, linkage to ISO/IEC 17011 clauses and clauses of other requirements documents

**Information provided to course participants in advance**

* Agenda
* Full details of required reading prior to the course

**Course participants to bring**

* Copy of ISO/IEC 17011
* Copy of IAF/ILAC A2, A3, A5; APAC MRA-001, 002 and 003

**Formal Monitoring of Course Participants**

* All course participants to be monitored using APAC FMRA-009. All training facilitators will meet and come to consensus on the rating of all participants.
* Participants will be scored on their:
* Preparation for the course;
* Demonstrated understanding of evaluation concepts;
* Participation in their group discussions, and
* Demonstrated ability to work within their teams.
* Successful completion of the course requires a pass score of 12 as assigned by the Evaluator Trainers.
* Trainees that do not achieve a pass score of 12 will be counselled by the Evaluator Trainers on the steps to take to overcome the performance barriers noted during the course. The MRA MC will be informed of the contents of such discussion.
* All scoring of participants is confidential between the Evaluator Trainers, the participants and the MRA MC.
* The Evaluation Training Course – Participant Evaluation Forms will be submitted to the MRA MC.