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## 1. What is APAC and its role?

Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) is a regional cooperation of accreditation bodies in the Asia-Pacific region. APAC was established on 1 January 2019 by the amalgamation of two former regional accreditation cooperations:

- the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) and
- the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC).

The main role of APAC is to harmonize the accreditation activity in the Asia-Pacific Region.

To facilitate the above, APAC manages and extends mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) among accreditation bodies in the Asia-Pacific region.

APAC is recognized by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as one of four APEC Specialist Regional Bodies (SRBs) that support the work of the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance.



## 2. What is APAC MRA & its benefits?

The APAC MRA (Mutual recognition arrangement) forms a regional network of conformity assessment bodies (e.g. laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies etc.) which are accredited by accreditation bodies that have been peer-evaluated and recognized as being competent by their peers in other economies.

This network facilitates the acceptance of conformity assessment results (e.g. test reports, calibration certificates, inspection reports and certifications) across the Asia-Pacific region and other regions around the world, thus contributing to the facilitation of trade and the free-trade goal of “tested/ inspected/ certified once, accepted everywhere”. Using services of APAC MRA members helps businesses, communities, regulators and government organisation manage risks and make sound decisions to promote international trade.



## 3. What is the link between ILAC/ IAF and APAC?

International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and International Accreditation Forum (IAF) manages Mutual Recognition/ Multilateral Arrangements (MRA/ MLA) in the fields of accreditation of calibration, testing, medical testing, inspection, proficiency testing providers (PTP), reference material producers (RMP) and for Certification like Management Systems, Product, Personnel and related certifications with Validation and Verification respectively.

The regional arrangements are managed by the recognized regional co-operation bodies (like APAC in the Asia-Pacific region) that work in harmony with ILAC/ IAF.

The system of international MRA now in place through ILAC/IAF and APAC (in Asia- Pacific region) has enabled accredited conformity assessment bodies to achieve a form of international recognition, thus allowing conformity assessment results/reports like test reports, inspection reports, certifications accompanying exported goods and services to be more readily accepted on overseas markets.

Such MRA facilitates the acceptance of conformity assessment results (e.g. test reports, test certificates, inspection reports, and certification) across the region and with other regions around the world.

Such MLA facilitates that the conformity assessment certificates issued within the sub-scopes of the IAF MLA by conformity assessment bodies accredited by an accreditation body IAF MLA signatory will be recognised in the worldwide IAF program



#### 4. Who are the members of APAC?

APAC has two classes of membership:

1. **Associate membership:** Organisations that provide, or are building the capacity to provide, accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011:2017 and relevant IAF and ILAC requirements. To be considered for Associate Member status, the organisation must have already accredited at least two conformity assessment bodies in accordance with the relevant international standards.

Associate Members are expected to undertake their initial peer evaluation to become Full Members within the first three years of their Associate membership.

2. **Full membership:** is reserved for Associate Members that have successfully completed their initial peer evaluation under the APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). They become APAC Full Members after their positive peer evaluation recommendation is accepted by all the existing APAC Full Members.

**Affiliate:** Organisations that are not an accreditation body, or not building capacity to become one but have an interest in accredited conformity assessment results such as associations of conformity assessment bodies, national accreditation focal points (NAFP), or organizations that represent user interest (e.g. specifiers, regulators) may be eligible to become an Affiliate of APAC. APAC membership or affiliate status is not available for individual conformity assessment bodies.

For detailed list of all members, visit <https://www.apac-accreditation.org/membership/>



#### 5. Who are the members of APAC MRA signatory?

For the list along with the scopes and sub-scopes of all APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signatories visit <https://www.apac-accreditation.org/membership/full-member/>



#### 6. What are the scopes of the APAC MRA?

The APAC MRA is based on the results of an intensive peer evaluation of each accreditation body done in accordance with procedures detailed in the relevant APAC publications. Each APAC MRA signatory has demonstrated conformity with the international standard for accreditation bodies 'ISO/IEC 17011' and its accredited facilities are in conformity with one or more of the following conformity assessment body standards:

- ISO 14065 Greenhouse gas validation and verification
- ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection
- ISO/IEC 17021-1 Management systems certification
  - Energy management systems (EnMS)
  - Environmental management systems (EMS)
  - Feed additives and premixtures quality system (FAMI-QS)
  - Food safety management systems (FSMS)
  - Information security management systems (ISMS)

- ISO/IEC 17024 Person certification
- ISO/IEC 17024 Person certification – IPC
- ISO/IEC 17025 Calibration
- ISO/IEC 17025 Testing
- ISO 15189 Medical testing
- ISO/IEC 17034 Reference materials producers
- ISO/IEC 17043 Proficiency testing providers
- ISO/IEC 17065 Product certification
- ISO/IEC 17065 Product certification – GlobalGAP
- ISO 20387 Biobanking



## 7. What are the advantages of being an APAC MRA signatory?

The benefits of being an APAC MRA signatory are:

- Provide international recognition to your accredited conformity assessment bodies (CAB).
- MRA supports international trade through the removal of technical barriers.
- MRA promotes international confidence and acceptance of data generated by accredited laboratories and inspection bodies.
- MRA supports regulators to recognize and accept data that is driven by regulatory or public policy frameworks in sectors such as health, environment and others.
- The MRA provides governments with a credible and technically robust framework on which to further develop and enhance government to government bilateral and multilateral international trade agreements.
- The MRA acts as an internationally recognised ‘stamp of approval’ to demonstrate compliance against agreed standards and requirements. Consequently, risk is minimised, as decisions will be based on reliable results.
- The MRA supports businesses that depend on data from conformity assessment bodies, it enhances confidence in the accuracy of the test, calibration, inspection reports or certifications generated.
- The MRA provides additional confidence to the general public and consumers purchasing conformity assessment services.



## 8. What are the advantages of APAC Membership?

Being an APAC member provides an opportunity to

- Learn from and interact with experienced accreditation bodies which assist with the development of your system;
- Interact with other developing accreditation systems to share experiences and seek common solutions to problems;
- Participate in the APAC annual meeting which helps to share updates and developments in the field of conformity assessment and experience sharing amongst the accreditation bodies.



## 9. How can I become a member of APAC ?

Organization wishing to become APAC member first need to see in which category membership they fall in. Please refer the above Question no. 4 to know about different categories of membership.

Once the same has been decided then organizations need to review GOV-001 APAC Constitution and GOV-002 APAC Regulations and Codes and the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) documents.

For detailed information, visit “membership criteria” and under publication tab visit “GOV series” and “MRA series” at APAC website [www.apac-accreditation.org](http://www.apac-accreditation.org)



## 10. Where can I get a list of accredited conformity assessment bodies in a particular economy?

Accreditation bodies in many economies publish on their website the lists or directories of the conformity assessment bodies that they have accredited, together with contact details and information on their scope. You can visit the accreditation body website to find out further information. Pl ensure to review the scope in detail of accreditation.



## 11. Can APAC accredit a conformity assessment body like Certification body, Lab or inspection body?

APAC itself doesn't accredit any conformity assessment body. The APAC has full members which are accreditation body in Asia-Pacific region who are involved in the accreditation of laboratories, certification & inspection bodies. These Accreditation Bodies accredits the conformity assessment bodies.

If you want to get accredited, please contact the National Accreditation Body of your country/region to apply for accreditation.

To find the APAC full member Accreditation Body of your country, visit the “[Members](#)” page <https://www.apac-accreditation.org/membership/>



## 12. How can I make a complaint against a laboratory/ inspection/ certification/ verification body?

APAC deals with any complaints with the utmost priority and in confidence.

For the complaints against a conformity assessment body, you should first send your complaint to the particular body. If the matter cannot be resolved within a satisfactory timeframe and manner, then you have right to refer the matter to the accreditation body that has accredited that conformity assessment body.

If the complaint still cannot be resolved, then the complaint should be referred to the APAC.

For detailed information, read “[APAC MS-004 Complaints Appeals Ver 1.0 \(20190101\)](#)”



### 13. How can I be sure that my certificate or test report is valid?

1. Look for the accreditation body logo and certification body symbol along with ILAC/IAF MRA/ MLA mark. To check IAF and ILAC mark visit IAF and ILAC website.
2. To verify the authenticity of these bodies, check on APAC website the list of full members and see if the accredited body logo mentioned on the certificate is listed or not and also verify the scope.
3. If the accreditation body is identified, visit the AB website and search for the conformity assessment body name and verify the scope.
4. If all the above steps are checked and ensured then your certificate is valid.



### 14. Who can use the APAC logo? Can I use APAC logo on my calibration/ testing/ certification/ inspection/ verification reports?

The use of APAC logo is restricted.

The following bodies may use the logo without prior authorization; the logo shall be used in connection with official APAC activities:

- The APAC Secretariat
- Members of the APAC Executive Committee

APAC Treasurer, Quality Manager and all APAC Committee Chairs may use APAC logo on their business cards at their discretion. The business cards shall indicate which APAC position the office bearer is holding.

Please note that only APAC members are eligible for using APAC logo. The member wishing to use the APAC logo shall make a request in writing to the APAC Secretariat, setting out the details of the proposed use of the APAC logo.

The APAC logo shall not be used by conformity assessment bodies accredited by APAC Members, or clients of those conformity assessment bodies. APAC logo cannot be used on calibration/ testing/ certificates/ inspection or verification reports.

For further details on use of APAC logo, kindly refer [APAC COM-002 Use of the APAC Logo](#)



### 15. Where can I find a Proficiency Testing Program?

- For the proficiency testing programs provided by APAC, refer the TEC2 series of APAC publications. For further details, please contact Mr. He Ping, Chairman of the APAC Proficiency Testing Sub committee at: [heping@cnas.org.cn](mailto:heping@cnas.org.cn)
- For the Proficiency Testing Providers in the Asia-Pacific region refer the APAC PTP Search website.
- For the Proficiency Testing schemes (PT schemes) operated in Europe, the Americas and in Australia, refer BAM EPTIS website.





## 16. Where to verify the scope of accreditation granted by an APAC member accreditation body?

To verify the scope of accreditation granted by an APAC member accreditation body, visit 'member' page at APAC website <https://www.apac-accreditation.org/membership/> wherein the APAC Members and Affiliates are listed in order of their economy. A brief info and the link to the respective website of accreditation body is provided.



## 17. What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying *the formal demonstration of its competence* to carry out specific conformity assessment task.



## 18. What is Conformity Assessment body (CAB)?

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is a body that performs conformity assessment activities which includes but not limited to testing including medical Laboratory, calibration laboratory, proficiency testing provider, certified reference material producer, inspection, validation, verification certification and others.



## 19. What is Accreditation Body, what does it do?

Accreditation body is an authoritative body that gives formal recognition to the conformity assessment bodies (CAB) through third party attestation of the technical competence of the CAB.



## 20. What is certification?

Certification is a third-party conformity assessment activity that leads to a statement demonstrating that specified requirements related to products, processes, systems or persons have been met.



## 21. What is the difference between accreditation and certification?

Certification represents a written assurance by a third party of the conformity of a product, process or service to specified requirements whereas Accreditation, is the formal recognition by an authoritative body of the competence to work to specified standards.