

Qualification, Monitoring and Training of APAC Evaluators

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# Introduction

* 1. This document defines the procedures that the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (APAC) uses to select, train, qualify, evaluate 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).
  2. 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.
  3. The APAC MRA Management Committee (MRAMC) is responsible for the selection, training, qualification, evaluation and monitoring of peer evaluators on behalf of MRA Council.

# References

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

IAF/ILAC A3 IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Template report for the peer evaluation of an Accreditation Body based on ISO/IEC 17011:2017

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 MRA-005 Procedure for the Conduct of a Joint Evaluation with Another Regional Cooperation

APAC MRA-006 A Guide for the Planning and Conduct of Evaluations

APAC FMRA-004 Peer Evaluator Nomination Form

APAC FMRA-006 APAC Peer Evaluation Feedback 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 List

# Qualification of a Peer Evaluator

## Grades of Peer Evaluator

3.1.1 APAC has four grades of peer evaluator:

1. Nominee Evaluator;
2. Provisional Evaluator;
3. Evaluator;
4. Lead Evaluator.

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

## Qualification of Peer Evaluators

### 3.2.1 Nominations

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

3.2.1.2 A nominee must be a current employee and staff member of the nominating accreditation body (contracted assessors and nominees are not acceptable as APAC Evaluator nominees).

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

NOTE For candidates that provide evidence that they are already evaluators for other IAF or ILAC recognised regional accreditation groups, APAC will confirm those persons for the equivalent APAC evaluator grade, scopes and sub-scopes.

3.2.1.3 The APAC Secretariat shall update APAC FMRA-015 and inform the candidate of the result. Confirmed candidates shall be known as Nominee Evaluators.

### 3.2.2 Training

3.2.2.1 Nominee Evaluators shall undertake an APAC peer evaluator training course (see 5.1) or equivalent (e.g. an evaluator training course conducted by another recognised regional group) prior to appointment as a Provisional Evaluator.

3.2.2.2 The cost of attending the training course shall be borne by the APAC member of the Nominee Evaluator. APAC may provide some reimbursement of expenses to Nominee Evaluators attending the training course.

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

3.2.2.4 The trainers shall complete APAC FMRA-009s for all Nominee Evaluators, and if concerns arise with individual Nominee Evaluators, discuss the contents with that person. The finalised form shall be submitted to the APAC Secretariat within one month of the training course.

3.2.2.5 The APAC FMRA-009 shall be considered by the MRAMC when determining whether the Nominee Evaluator can then be qualified as a Provisional Evaluator. If the decision from the MRAMC is not to qualify a Nominee Evaluator as a Provisional Evaluator, the MRAMC will provide the reason for this decision and, where applicable, the actions necessary for the Nominee Evaluator or his/her accreditation body to undertake before the Nominee Evaluator can be confirmed as a Provisional Evaluator.

### 3.2.3 Competence Criteria of Peer Evaluators

**3.2.3.1 Provisional Evaluator**

A Provisional Evaluator:

1. is an individual who meets the requirements for Candidate Peer Evaluation Team Member as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1 and the requirements for Evaluators detailed in Appendix 1 of this document;
2. is able to demonstrate they have been trained and are conversant with the requirements of the current version of ISO/IEC 17011;
3. has successfully completed a peer evaluator training course (refer 3.2.2); and
4. is available to complete at least one peer evaluation within 24 months of attendance at the training.

**3.2.3.2 Evaluator**

An Evaluator:

1. is an individual who meets the criteria for Peer Evaluator Team Member as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2, Annex 1 and the requirements detailed in Appendix 1 of this document;
2. has participated in a minimum of one peer evaluation under the supervision of a Lead Evaluator or an experienced Evaluator;
3. has received a positive recommendation from the Lead Evaluator in APAC FMRA-008; and
4. has been accepted by the MRAMC.

**3.2.3.3 Lead Evaluator**

1. A Lead Evaluator is an individual who meets the requirements of Peer Evaluator Team Leader as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1 and the requirements detailed in Appendix 1 of this document.
2. When an evaluator wishes to become a Lead Evaluator, the evaluator shall make this known to the Team Leader (TL) when they are selected to be part of an evaluation team.
3. At the end of the evaluation the TL shall consider whether the evaluator demonstrated the requirements of a Lead Evaluator / Team Leader as detailed in IAF/ILAC-A2 Annex 1 and make a recommendation using APAC FMRA-008.
4. The APAC FMRA-008 is to be forwarded to the MRAMC for approval.
5. Once the evaluator has two approved recommendations for Lead Evaluator the APAC MRAMC shall decide whether to promote the evaluator to Lead Evaluator status.

NOTE Once a person achieves Lead Evaluator status they are eligible to be appointed as an evaluation Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader.

**3.2.3.4 Technical Expert**

A Technical Expert is an individual that satisfies the requirements for Technical Experts in APAC MRA-004 Appendix 1 and has been accepted by the MRAMC.

**3.2.3.5 Recognising additional scopes and sub-scopes**

Additional scopes and sub-scopes may be added for Nominee Evaluators, Provisional Evaluators, Evaluators and Lead Evaluators upon confirmation from their nominating accreditation body that they have been formally approved as having achieved ‘Lead Assessor’ status for that specific scope or sub-scope.

# Monitoring Peer Evaluator Performance

## Performance Review

4.1.1 The evaluation Team Leader is responsible for conducting the peer evaluation effectively. They are also responsible for monitoring the performance of each member of the peer evaluation team.

4.1.2 The Team Leader shall complete an APAC FMRA-008 for each Team Member and return the completed form to the APAC Secretariat within one month of the completion of the onsite portion of the peer evaluation.

4.1.3 The APAC Secretariat shall submit the completed APAC FMRA-008 to the MRAMC for review and acceptance. Once accepted, the APAC Secretariat shall provide a copy of APAC FMRA-008 to the applicable Team Member.

4.1.4 Team Members shall complete an APAC FMRA-007 in relation to the performance of the Team Leader (and Deputy Team Leader when relevant) and return the completed form to the APAC Secretariat within one month of the completion of the onsite portion of the peer evaluation.

4.1.5 The APAC Secretariat shall submit the completed APAC FMRA-007 to the MRAMC Chair for review and acceptance. Once accepted, the APAC Secretariat shall provide the copies of the APAC FMRA-007s to the Team Leader.

4.1.6 If the performance of any Team Member or Team Leader is considered unsatisfactory, or if there are training or development needs identified for a Team Member or Team Leader, the MRAMC Chair shall discreetly consult with the relevant Team Member or Team Leader on the areas of performance that may require improvement. The MRAMC may suspend an individual’s peer evaluator status at any time based on a review of performance.

4.1.7 The MRAMC may terminate an individual’s peer evaluator status in the following circumstances:

1. where the performance of an evaluator has brought APAC (or other regional group), 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.

4.1.8 Each MRA signatory or applicant shall be asked to complete the APAC FMRA-006 *Peer Evaluation Feedback Form* 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.

## Maintenance of Peer Evaluator Status

* + 1. To maintain peer evaluator status, the peer evaluator shall participate in evaluations, evaluators’ meetings, and/or other activities organized by APAC, ILAC, IAF or other recognized organizations.

4.2.2 If a peer evaluator (including Nominee and Provisional Evaluators) have not participated in any peer evaluation or any training activity for 3 years, his/her qualification shall be reviewed by the MRAMC 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.

4.2.3 Once an APAC Evaluator ceases being a current employee and staff member of an accreditation body their APAC Evaluator status lapses at the end of any existing evaluation team assignments.

# Training Activities for Peer Evaluators

## Peer Evaluator Training Course

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

1. Lead Evaluators who have led at least two APAC peer evaluations;
2. 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;
3. agreement from their accreditation body of this additional duty for their staff member; and
4. have been successfully evaluated delivering training by a MRAMC member at least once every three years.

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

NOTE Typical elements of the peer evaluator training course are shown in Appendix 2.

5.1.3 The trainers shall record the outcome of the peer evaluator training course and submit the report and course materials to the APAC Secretariat within one month of the completion of the course.

## 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 MRAMC shall periodically organise a workshop for Lead Evaluators to ensure Lead Evaluators are kept up to date with changes to requirements and other documentation and to facilitate harmonisation of evaluations. The MRAMC 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 one month 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.

**AMENDMENT TABLE**

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Section(s) | Amendment(s) |
| 11/08/2022 | 4.1.5, 4.1.6 | Minor editorial change to confirm that the MRAMC Chair reviews the APAC FMRA-007s on Team Leader performance, and follows-up on unsatisfactory performance of Team Members or Team Leaders. |
| 28/07/2022 | 3.2.1.2, 4.2.3 | Minor additions to update APAC MRA-004 in line with the 2022-06-02 APAC MRAMC decision that APAC Evaluators shall only be current employees and staff members of accreditation bodies. |
| 03/03/2022 | A2.2 | Minor clarification added to emphasize the need for senior management or executive experience for Lead Evaluators. |
| 05/03/2021 | 3.2.3.5 | Additional subclause to clarify how evaluators can be recognized for additional scopes and sub-scopes. |
| 11/04/2020 | 1, 3-5 | Numerous amendments to clarify the competency and training expectations for evaluators. |
| 16/6/2019 | 3.2.3.4 | Added cross reference to APAC MRA-002 in response to IAF/ILAC Regional Evaluation findings. |
| 7/5/2019 | 3 | Simplification of the Lead Evaluator qualification process based on APAC MRAMC Action 1901-01. |
| 1/1/2019 | All | New issue on establishment of APAC. |

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# APPENDIX 1 QUALIFICATIONS OF PEER EVALUATORS AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS

**A1 Peer Evaluators**

A1.1 Peer Evaluators shall be able to evaluate whether:

1. an accreditation body complies with the requirements of appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents; and
2. an accreditation body’s accredited conformity assessment bodies comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents.

A1.2 A peer evaluator shall:

1. be an experienced Lead Assessor (or equivalent position);
2. preferably have experience in managing accreditation programmes;
3. have performed a significant number of assessments (i.e. no less than 10 assessments as a qualified Lead Assessor) in the Level 3 and/or Level 4 standards;
4. have a technical background relevant to the scope of recognition as an evaluator;
5. have a sound knowledge of the application of appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents, and relevant MRA supplementary requirements;
6. be able to determine the criticality of the findings;
7. have good interpersonal skills;
8. be competent in English; and
9. able to work effectively in a team environment.

**A2 Lead Evaluators**

A2.1 An APAC Lead Evaluator shall be able to:

1. lead the evaluation in an efficient and effective way, and be able to distribute the evaluation tasks equitably amongst Team Members;
2. evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents, and its accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents;
3. organize an evaluation team with an appropriate composition (maximum coverage of scope of the accreditation body and minimum number of members);
4. decide from the submitted documentation any areas requiring special examination during the evaluation;
5. report clearly and succinctly the findings of all Team Members, in compliance with APAC MRA-001;
6. determine the criticality and classification of findings (i.e. nonconformities and comments);
7. evaluate whether the corrective actions undertaken by the accreditation body are effective; and
8. adapt quickly and easily to different accreditation cultures.

A2.2 In order to meet these criteria, a Lead Evaluator shall:

1. demonstrate that they have senior managerial or executive position experience within their accreditation body or similar organisation;
2. have participated as a Team Member in at least two APAC (or equivalent) evaluations of accreditation bodies;
3. have a sound knowledge of the application of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC MRA documents;
4. be able to understand and to express him/herself clearly in English, in speaking and writing;
5. have experience in chairing meetings and in reaching consensus on matters of contention; and
6. have good interpersonal skills.

**A3 Technical Experts**

An APAC Technical Expert shall:

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. evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents, and its accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO or ISO/IEC standard(s) and corresponding IAF/ILAC documents and other APAC application documents;
3. have good interpersonal skills;
4. be able to be understood and to express him/herself clearly in English; and
5. be able to work effectively in a team environment.

NOTE 1 Technical Experts are chosen specifically for their technical expertise when that expertise is not available otherwise to the evaluation team.

NOTE 2 Technical Experts are not asked to evaluate on their own any aspects of ISO/IEC 17011, however they are able to provide specific technical input to the evaluator. They should be closely supervised by the Team Leader including during attendance at witness assessments.

**A4 Lead Evaluator, Evaluator and Technical Expert Attributes**

A4.1 Lead Evaluators, Evaluators and Technical Experts should:

1. be open minded and mature;
2. possess sound judgement, analytical skills, and tenacity; and
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.

A4.2 Evaluators shall be able to manage and work with Technical Experts, within the limitations of Technical Experts’ roles in evaluations.

A4.3 Lead Evaluators, Evaluators and Technical Experts should be able to apply the attributes of A4.1 in order to:

1. obtain and assess objective evidence fairly;
2. remain true to the purpose of the evaluation without fear or bias;
3. evaluate constantly the effects of evaluation observations and personal interactions during an evaluation;
4. treat concerned personnel in a way that will best achieve the evaluation objective;
5. react with sensitivity to the local conventions of the area in which the evaluation is performed;
6. perform the evaluation process without deviating due to distractions;
7. commit full attention and support to the evaluation process;
8. react effectively in stressful situations;
9. arrive at generally acceptable conclusions based on evaluation observations; and
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

**A2.1 Typical topic areas**

1. Concepts of accreditation and conformity assessment
2. Overview of ISO/IEC 17011 – key elements; possible “contentious” clauses
3. IAF/ILAC-A2 and A3; all APAC MRA series documents
4. Planning an evaluation, including:
5. assignment of tasks, especially to avoid duplication of assessments of overarching clauses;
6. consideration of where key processes are undertaken and the geographic spread of the AB to determine appropriate sampling; and
7. how to incorporate social/cultural aspects depending on AB location.
8. The audit planning process, recognizing any needs for the effective allocation of skills/schemes to ensure that the number of evaluators is manageable.
9. Evidence gathering, linkage to clauses of ISO/IEC 17011 and other requirements documents (needs to emphasize that findings must be linked to relevant clause of document)
10. Process-based assessment
11. Evaluation team dynamics
12. Report preparation and report writing
13. Handling delays, a lack of communication, conflict or other disruptions to the evaluation

**A2.2 Possible group exercises**

1. Evidence needed to evaluate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011
2. Planning an evaluation, based on an accreditation body scenario
3. Examining the impartiality and related body clauses of ISO/IEC 17011
4. Tactics for determining the appropriate evaluation duration and evaluation team composition, based on an accreditation body scenario
5. Reporting of findings, classification of findings, linkage to ISO/IEC 17011 clauses and clauses of other requirements documents
6. Risk-based principles

**A2.3 Information provided to course participants in advance**

1. Agenda
2. Full details of required reading prior to the course

**A2.4 Course participants to bring**

1. Copy of ISO/IEC 17011
2. Copy of IAF/ILAC A2, A3, A5; APAC MRA-001, 002, 003, 005 and 006

**A2.5 Formal Monitoring of Course Participants**

A2.5.1 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.

A2.5.2 Participants will be scored on their:

1. preparation for the course;
2. demonstrated understanding of evaluation concepts;
3. participation in their group discussions; and
4. demonstrated ability to work within their teams.

A2.5.3 Successful completion of the course requires a pass score of 12 as assigned by the Evaluator Trainers.

A2.5.4 Trainees who 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 MRAMC will be informed of the contents of such discussion.

A2.5.5 All scoring of participants is confidential between the Evaluator Trainers, the participants and the MRAMC.

A2.5.6 The Evaluation Training Course – Participant Evaluation Forms will be submitted to the MRAMC.