



Inter American Accreditation Cooperation

## IAAC Quality Manual

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### AVAILABILITY

Copies of this document in English and Spanish are available from the IAAC Secretariat and the IAAC website.

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### IAAC Quality Manual

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### IAAC Quality Manual

The current document, IAAC AD 003 “IAAC Quality Manual”, provides the current operational basis of the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and describes the management system requirements to guarantee the fulfillment of its objectives.

#### 1. What is IAAC?

The Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) is an association of accreditation bodies and other organizations interested in conformity assessment in the Americas.

IAAC was created in 1996, in Montevideo, Uruguay and legally established in 2001 as a civil association according to the laws of Mexico.

IAAC is a nonprofit organization operating on the basis of cooperation among its members and stakeholders. IAAC’s resources come from membership fees, voluntary donations by its members and contributions in projects by regional organizations such as the Organization of American States. IAAC’s basic documents are the Memorandum of Understanding and the Bylaws.

IAAC is recognized by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with APLAC (Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation), PAC (Pacific Accreditation Cooperation) and SADCA (Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation), and works in close cooperation with other related organizations.

#### 2. IAAC Articles of Incorporation

Through its Articles of Incorporation, the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) makes its cooperation activity formal and legal in line with the applicable international laws, as stated in the document IAAC AD 004 “IAAC Articles of Incorporation”, currently in force.

#### 3. Bylaws

Through its Bylaws, IAAC makes known the formal structures and rules aimed at reaching the objectives of the MOU, as stated in the document IAAC AD 002 “IAAC Bylaws”, currently in force.



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### 4. Memorandum of Understanding

Through the Memorandum of Understanding, IAAC communicates the basic elements of its origin, composition and functions, as stated in the document IAAC AD 001 “Memorandum of Understanding”, currently in force.

### 5. Vision

To be the recognized body of knowledge and expertise on accreditation and conformity assessment by national and regional authorities, accreditation bodies and stakeholders in all the countries in the Americas. To be an influential body in international accreditation and conformity assessment fora.

### 6. Quality Policy

IAAC is committed to:

- Ensuring that accredited conformity assessment bodies within the IAAC accreditation body community are competent;
- Providing a service of excellence to meet the needs of regional accreditation bodies of certification/registration bodies and inspection bodies, testing and calibration laboratories, conformity assessment bodies, and other interested parties;
- Increasing the acceptance of services of IAAC recognized accreditation bodies of certification/registration bodies, inspection bodies, testing and calibration laboratories in order to facilitate trade;
- Coordinating and maintaining Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLAs) of the countries' accreditation systems in the Americas.
- Achieving and maintaining Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangements (MLAs) with the international organizations of accreditation bodies.

### 7. Goals

The IAAC goals are:

- To develop, maintain, improve and expand the scopes of the IAAC Multilateral Recognition Agreements;
- To achieve and maintain international recognition as a Regional Cooperation by IAF and ILAC;
- To increase the acceptance of certificates and reports issued by accredited conformity assessment bodies through established Multilateral Recognition Agreements;



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- To facilitate collaboration, cooperation and mutual assistance among members by means of training activities, meetings of experts and sharing of information and experiences;
- To assist the current and potential IAAC members, and provide advice on matters related to accreditation of certification bodies, inspection bodies, testing and calibration laboratories;
- To harmonize the criteria for the operation of member accreditation bodies, based on ISO/IEC international standard and guides and IAF and ILAC documents;
- To facilitate the Exchange of information between accreditation body members of IAAC and members of IAF and ILAC;
- To promote cooperation in training of peer evaluators and other personnel of accreditation bodies;
- To encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of standards, guidelines and application of documents that have been developed by relevant international bodies, such as IAF and ILAC;
- To encourage and support the development of accreditation bodies in the Americas;
- To work with other regional bodies such as Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the Inter American Metrology System (SIM), the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC), the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), the Southern African Development Community in Accreditation (SADCA), as well as technical bodies from different sub regional blocs; and
- To seek financial and other types of support for IAAC members from regional and international organizations to develop training and assessment programs in the areas of accreditation and conformity assessment.

### **8. Strategic Plan**

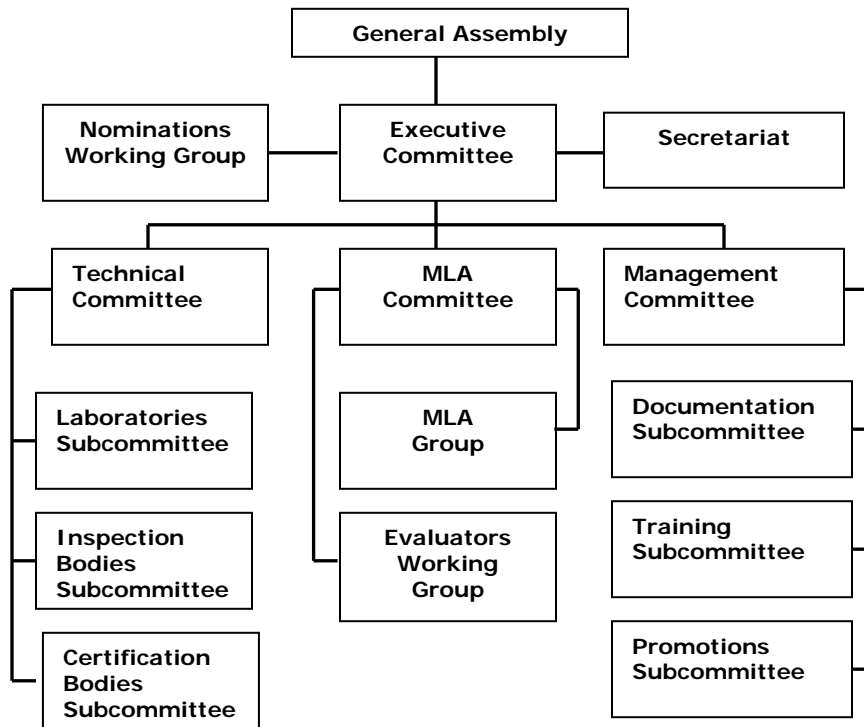
IAAC relies on a strategic plan with defined priorities and formal goals and actions to be communicated to all relevant organizational levels, as stated in the document IAAC AD 006 “IAAC Strategic Plan”, currently in force.

### **9. Organizational Structure**

The Organizational Structure of IAAC includes a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, an Executive

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Secretary, Committees, Subcommittees and Working Groups, as described in the figure below:



### 10. Terms of Reference

As an organization based on the continuous effort of organizations and persons, IAAC coordinates its activity through its current strategic plan (IAAC AD 006 “IAAC Strategic Plan”, which rules and organizes every effort using terms of reference defined for the various working, decision-making and governing groups. The terms of reference established by IAAC are:

- Executive Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 020, currently in force.)
- MLA terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 021, currently in force.)
- Technical Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 022, currently in force.)
- Management Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 023, currently in force.)



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- Laboratories Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 024, currently in force.)
- Inspection Bodies Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 025, currently in force.)
- Certification Bodies Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 026, currently in force.)
- Documentation Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 027, currently in force.)
- Promotion Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 028, currently in force.)
- Training Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 029, currently in force.)
- Nominations Group terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 041, currently in force.)
- Evaluators Working Group terms of reference are described in the MD 004 document.

### **11. IAAC Members' Assembly**

IAAC members gather annually to receive an update of all relevant events and actions undertaken in the previous year, hold discussions and agree on the organization's future work. The coordination and planning of this assembly is described in the current document IAAC AD 002 "IAAC Bylaws".

### **12. Policies and Procedures Documents**

All associated IAAC policies and procedures documents are published in the IAAC Documents Master List which is on the IAAC Website [www.iaac.org.mx](http://www.iaac.org.mx).

### **13. Management Review**

The management review is essential to ensure the proper operation and development of the strategic plan, the achievement of IAAC goals and the proper operation and improvement of IAAC Management System. The management review is carried out by IAAC Executive Committee according to the current document IAAC PR 010 "Procedure for Management Review".

### **14. Internal Audit**

IAAC performs systematic internal audits of its management system, processes and results according to the current document IAAC PR 011 "Procedure for Internal Audits", which establishes requirements to present, perform and check



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the results of corrective actions resulting from internal audits. This way IAAC verifies their operation, implementation and effectiveness, which allows for optimization and improvement of IAAC's operation.

### **15. Document control**

In the document IAAC PR 001 "Procedure for IAAC documents control", currently in force, IAAC has established a procedure for the effective control of its management system documents in order to ensure its proper drafting, identification, classification, revision, voting, approval, validity and distribution and their publication in other languages (see document IAAC PR 009 "Translation procedure for IAF and ILAC documents", currently in force).

Likewise, a procedure is in place for the adoption by IAAC of international documents: IAAC PR 007, "Procedure for the adoption by IAAC of international documents", currently in force.

### **16. Record control**

IAAC demonstrates conformity with its management system requirements and commitments through documents issued as evidence of its activity, which are IAAC records. Records are controlled as described in the document IAAC PR 020 "IAAC Records Management Procedure", currently in force.

### **17. Complaints and appeals**

All complaints and appeals filed to IAAC are handled according to the document IAAC PR 005 "Procedure for handling complaints and appeals", currently in force, which ensures that the parties involved state their views, and a resolution is issued in accordance with the relevant IAAC rules and requirements (see document IAAC PR 006 "Procedure to write IAAC Resolutions", currently in force).

### **18. Corrective and preventive actions**

The steps to take corrective and preventive actions resulting from internal audits, management reviews, complaints and appeals are described in the current procedures established by IAAC to this effect and established in this Quality Manual.

If any activities lead to corrective and preventive actions resulting from sources other than the above, the IAAC Secretary will record them and submit them to the IAAC President to decide who will be appointed to monitor said actions until their closure.



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### **19. Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA)**

The documents regarding the “Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA)” are a major effort to develop and meet IAAC goals. In this regard, the document IAAC MD 001 “IAAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement”, currently in force, describes the elements of a Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement, in order to ensure its correct and appropriate implementation.

This MLA is based on results from evaluations carried out according to procedure MD 002 “Policies and procedures for a Multilateral Recognition Agreement among Accreditation Bodies”, currently in force.

IAAC makes the application documents available to all its interested parties (see document IAAC FM 001 “IAAC MLA Application Form”, currently in force).

### **20. Notice of changes**

Signatories to the IAAC MLA shall notify the IAAC Secretary and the President of the MLA Committee as soon as possible of any significant changes in the status and/or operational practices of its system, such as a change of name or legal status; details of new agreements; revision, suspension or termination of any agreement; major changes in its key staff and/or organizational structure; major operational changes, especially in the mechanisms to ensure the proper functioning of the organization; details about the use of subcontracted evaluations; or any change to be reviewed which may have an impact on the accreditation bodies signatories of the IAAC MLA in order to take relevant action.

### **21. Selection, training, qualification and monitoring the performance of peer evaluators**

In order to include a new member into the MLA, IAAC makes sure of counting on a staff with the adequate qualification, experience and competence to carry out the assessment process. The application and requirements to be an IAAC peer evaluator (Document IAAC FM 006 “IAAC Peer evaluator curriculum vitae form”, currently in force) make it possible to rely on such staff and establish proper qualification and training processes. This process to select, train, qualify and monitor peer evaluators is established in the following documents: IAAC MD 002 “Policies and procedures for a Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement among Accreditation Bodies” and IAAC PR 004 “Procedure for selection, training, qualification and monitoring the performance of IAAC peer evaluators”, both currently in force.



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### **22. IAAC confidentiality and impartiality**

Through its declaration of confidentiality and impartiality, IAAC communicates and establishes the rules and commitments of its peer evaluators to protect the confidential nature of the information about the evaluation process and be impartial at all times. This declaration is formally stated and described in the document IAAC FM 011 “IAAC Declaration of confidentiality and impartiality”, currently in force. In this connection, IAAC guarantees the fulfillment of the established regulations through the document IAAC PR 004 “Procedure for the monitoring of peer evaluators”, currently in force.

### **23. Use of the IAAC logo**

IAAC has established regulations for the correct use of the IAAC logo (see document IAAC PR 023 “Use of the IAAC logo”, currently in force).

### **24. IAAC Website**

You can find IAAC at [www.iaac.org.mx](http://www.iaac.org.mx), which includes an open public section and a members-only section. The latter is open to all IAAC members without restriction, as well as to other organizations and IAAC stakeholders.

The member appointed by each organization is given a personal user name and password to enter the website. Every user is responsible for the use and control of the password and the confidential nature of the information they access.

User names and passwords are assigned to representatives of other organizations and stakeholders to access specific topics for a limited amount of time. These representatives are responsible for the use and control of their passwords and the confidential nature of the information they access.

The IAAC website is managed by the IAAC Secretariat, and is responsible for assigning user names and passwords to enter the website. The contents and texts, published in the website under the supervision of the IAAC Secretariat, are validated beforehand, as appropriate, by the General Assembly, a Committee, a Subcommittee, or a Working Group.

Any necessary or proposed change in the information and structure of the website must be previously authorized, as appropriate, by the General Assembly, a Committee, a Subcommittee or a Working Group and coordinated by the IAAC Secretariat. Any IAAC member, committee or stakeholder may request a change in the content of the website.

IAAC has a contract with the website providers in accordance with the required safety, privacy and confidentiality policies and rules established by IAAC that guarantees its proper and continuous operation.



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