



## Inter American Accreditation Cooperation

### **MLA COMMITTEE AND MLA GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **CLASSIFICATION**

This document is classified as an IAAC Administrative Document.

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### MLA COMMITTEE AND MLA GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### 1. Objective

- a) The objective of the MLA Committee is to plan and manage the implementation and maintenance of IAAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA). The objective of the MLA Group is to decide on and manage membership in the IAAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA).
- b) This document specifies the functions, composition and responsibilities of the MLA Committee and the MLA Group.

#### 2. Functions of the MLA Committee (MLAC)

- a) Implement and maintain policies and operational procedures of the IAAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement MLA;
- b) Identify specific needs for development and continual improvement of IAAC MLA;
- c) Establish the criteria to qualify evaluators and lead evaluators;
- d) Keep an updated registry of peer evaluators, for participation in IAAC MLA peer evaluation process;
- e) Manage the performance evaluation process of the peer evaluators;
- f) Plan and monitor peer evaluation processes;
- g) Propose and develop training activities for peer evaluators (workshops, courses, seminars, etc.), in coordination with the Training Subcommittee, in order to harmonize the application of criteria;
- h) Create and dissolve ad-hoc groups as needed for the development of specific tasks in a predetermined timeframe, and monitor their progress;
- i) Keep the IAAC Secretariat informed about the MLAC's activities, including MLAG minutes and resolutions, MLAC resolutions, attendance list or other activities; and
- j) Liaise with management committees of other international and regional MLAs (e.g., ILAC, IAF, APLAC, PAC, EA).



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### 3. Composition of the MLA Committee

- a) The MLAC shall have a Chair and a Vice-Chair, elected by the General Assembly in accordance with the Bylaws, for a term of two years, and can be reelected once. In any case, the incumbent may serve for a maximum of four consecutive years.
- b) The MLAC shall have an MLA Secretary, who may be the IAAC Secretary.
- c) The MLAC will be integrated by one representative of each full member, two representatives of the associated members, and two representatives of the stakeholder members.

Note: All associate members and stakeholder members may participate in the meetings of the MLAC as observers.

- d) The representatives of IAAC full members, associate members and stakeholder members shall be nominated by their entities to the Chair of the MLAC.
- e) The representatives of full and associate members have a voice and vote, and the stakeholders only have a voice.
- f) A single vote is considered for each member, not for each country.
- g) Decisions by the MLA Committee shall be made by consensus. If consensus is not achieved, decisions shall be made by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the MLAC members voting (abstentions will not be considered). Decision may be made either in meetings or by e-mail/postal ballot.
- h) Invitations to other organizations to participate as observers can be made by the Chair of the MLAC.

### 4. Functions of the MLA Group (MLAG)

- a) To make decisions on the acceptance of applications to the IAAC MLA.
- b) To make decisions on the need for a preliminary visit
- c) To make decisions regarding the status of membership to the IAAC MLA, including granting, maintenance, suspension and withdrawal from the MLA.
- d) To review evaluation report findings to confirm that they are correctly classified and that the report contains the necessary information to have full confidence that the AB complies with MLA requirements.

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- e) To oversee implementation of IAAC, ILAC and IAF resolutions relevant to the MLA.
- f) To review changes notified by signatories that affect the MLA and to decide on subsequent actions.

### 5. Composition of the MLA Group

- a) The Chair and the Vice Chair of the MLAC are the Chair and Vice Chair of the MLAG.
- b) The MLAG shall have a Secretary who may the MLAC Secretary.
- c) The MLAG will be integrated by one representative of each signatory to the IAAC MLA. Each representative may be accompanied by a deputy.

Note: All full members that are not signatories to the IAAC MLA and all associate members may participate in the meetings of the MLA Group as observers.

- d) Each signatory has a voice and vote.
- e) A single vote is considered for each signatory, not for each country.
- f) Decisions by the MLAG shall be made by consensus. If consensus is not achieved decisions shall be made by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the MLAG members voting (abstentions will not be considered). Decision may be made either in meetings or by e-mail/postal ballot.
- g) Invitations to other organizations to participate as observers can be made by the Chair of the MLA Group.
- h) Observers from IAAC full and associate members that attend an MLAG meeting may request permission to the MLA Group to receive minutes of the MLA Group meeting that they have observed.
- i) The evaluation team leader and evaluation team members may be invited to participate as observers in MLA Group meetings where the report of a peer evaluation they have performed is discussed. During the meetings they may observe the MLA Group's discussion and decision making and will respond to MLA Group's questions, provide clarifications and any information that may help the MLA Group in the decision making process. If a representative of an MLA signatory has participated in a peer evaluation, he / she shall abstain for voting in the relevant decision and his/her substitute may issue the vote.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1 The Chair's responsibilities are:

- a) Carry out these Terms of Reference
- b) Chair meetings of the MLAC and the MLAG;
- c) Appoint team leader and team members for peer evaluations;
- d) Submit to the MLAG peer evaluation reports and all other matters that requires their decision;
- e) Report to the General Assembly and Executive Committee about the work that is being carried out in the MLAC;
- f) Submit to the General Assembly for ratification, all the resolutions adopted by the MLA Committee;
- g) Inform the IAAC General Assembly of new signatories and their scopes of recognition and other decisions related to maintenance, suspension or withdrawal from the MLA; and
- h) Maintain the Vice-Chair informed on all of the current and planned activities.

### 6.2 The Vice-Chair's responsibilities are:

- a) Assist the Chair in the fulfillment of his/her duties;
- b) Replace the Chair in his/her absence or impediment; and
- c) Maintain permanent contact with the Chair in order to be aware of the current and planned activities, and assist the Chair in carrying them out.

### 6.3 The MLA Secretary's responsibilities are:

- a) Assist the Chair in the fulfillment of his/her duties; and
- b) Draft meeting resolutions and distribute them to the MLAC and MLAG members, respectively
- c) Distribute to MLAC members the working papers for committee meetings.
- d) Distribute to MLAG members the evaluation reports which require MLAG decisions as well as other MLAG working papers.
- e) Maintain the peer evaluator registry and peer evaluation records.
- f) Maintain and publish the list of MLA Signatories;



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- g) Submit an annual IAAC MLA report for the IAF MLA MC and to the ILAC AMC.

6.4 The MLAC members' responsibilities are:

- a) Attend MLAC meetings and actively participate in the specialized working groups formed to carry out the Committee tasks;
- b) Develop initiatives to assist the accomplishment of the MLA Committee's goals;
- c) Perform in a timely manner, the tasks and responsibilities assigned individually or as a part of a working group;
- d) Monitor the performance of peer evaluators.

6.5 The MLAG members' responsibilities are:

- a) To ensure that it appoints a representative and deputy to the MLAG that are familiar with the peer evaluation process;
- b) Vote in MLAG decisions.

6.6 The representative of the MLAG member shall

- a) Attend the MLAG meetings and participate in the MLAG discussions;
- b) Review evaluation report findings to confirm that they are correctly classified and that the report contains the necessary information to have full confidence that the AB complies with MLA requirements.
- c) Review and participate in decisions on peer evaluation reports, applications for recognitions, recommendations for preliminary visits, and other decisions related to signatory status.

## 7. MEETINGS

7.1 The MLAC and the MLAG shall meet when considered necessary by the Chair, by the IAAC General Assembly, or by at least one third of its members.

7.2 The MLAC and the MLAG shall meet at least once a year.

7.3 The resolution(s) made by the MLAG shall be part of the MLAC resolutions.

7.4 Draft agendas shall be distributed at least four weeks before each meeting.

7.5 Draft MLAC resolutions and MLAG minutes and resolutions shall be distributed within two months of the meeting.



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- 7.6 MLAC meeting documents shall be distributed at least two weeks prior to each meeting.
- 7.7 Evaluation reports which require MLAG decisions shall be distributed to MLAG members at least 15 days before the meetings.
- 7.8 MLAG documents are confidential. MLAG members representatives to the MLAG and their deputies shall sign the IAAC Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality, FM 011, just once before they are given access to the first evaluation report. The declaration remains valid throughout the entire MLAG process. Observers in the meetings of the MLA Group shall sign the IAAC Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality FM 011 at the beginning of each meeting. Observers in the meeting of the MLAG may be given access to evaluations reports before the meeting, provided that they sign FM 011 before being given access.