



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**  
**BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FORUM (IAF),**  
**INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION COOPERATION**  
**(ILAC), AND THE**  
**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION (ISO)**  
**CONCERNING CO-OPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ON**  
**ACCREDITATION AS PART OF CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

***The parties:***

***Having regard*** to the previous cooperative work between the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which includes:

- many years of ongoing cooperation, including the provision of documents to the market that have become the basis for internationally accepted accreditation, and the active involvement in each others activities at the policy and technical levels;
- joint statements on the transition period for ISO 9001:2000 in 1999 and 2003 between IAF, ISO/CASCO and ISO/TC 176;
- the results of the one-day meeting in 2000 on guidance documentation for CASCO normative documents between CEN/CENELEC/TC1, IAF, IEC/CAB (IECEE), ILAC, and ISO/CASCO;
- the formation in 2000 and subsequent operation of the IAF-ILAC-ISO/CASCO Joint Working Group on image and integrity of conformity assessment (IIJWG);
- the creation in 2001 of the ISO 9001 Advisory Group between IAF, ISO/TC 176 and ISO/CASCO;
- the creation in 2002 of the Good Auditing Practice Group between IAF and ISO/TC 176; and
- the joint statement in 2002 between IAF, ILAC and ISO/CASCO on the objectives and roles of accreditation and certification in laboratories;

***Desiring*** to fulfil the expectations of their respective memberships that this cooperation should continue amongst the parties;

***Recognizing*** the desire of ISO to centrally coordinate its policy and technical relationships on accreditation with the IAF and ILAC;

***Recognizing*** that IAF and ILAC wish to have the support of ISO in the provision of internationally recognized accreditation services by their members based on accreditation services in accordance with ISO/IEC Standards and Guides;

***Recognizing*** that ISO/IEC Standards and Guides are the source of requirements to ensure the competence of accreditation and conformity assessment bodies and activities, and recognising that ISO welcomes the support of IAF and ILAC in the development of those documents;



**Recognizing** that IAF and ILAC may wish to prepare guidance documents based on relevant ISO/IEC Standards and Guides for conformity assessment procedures to ensure consistency among the assessments by their members of conformity assessment bodies;

**Recognizing** that such guidance documents should not set principles or add requirements to those that are already stipulated in ISO/IEC Standards or Guides;

**Desiring** to formalise the various existing working relationships between the parties and record a workable basis for ongoing cooperation and coordination of activities of mutual interest;

**Hereby agree** to the following understandings:

## **A. Parties to the agreement**

1. The parties to this MOU are as follows:
  - a) the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) as represented by the IAF Chairman;
  - b) the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Inc. (ILAC) as represented by the ILAC Chairman; and
  - c) the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), as represented by the ISO Secretary General.

## **B. Definitions**

2. Definitions for terms used in this MOU are those as defined in ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, excluding the conformity assessment related terms currently contained in clauses 12-17 in Guide 2. Definitions for conformity assessment related terms shall instead be those that are set out in ISO/IEC DIS 17000.

## **C. Purpose and application of the MOU**

3. The purpose of this MOU is to record an understanding between the parties on their working relationship so as to achieve the scope.
4. This MOU is a high level understanding between the parties and provides a basis for other more specific agreements between the parties at operational levels.
5. This MOU does not make any legal or otherwise enforceable commitments on behalf of any of the parties.

## **D. Scope of the MOU**

6. The scope of this MOU covers the relationship between IAF, ILAC and ISO in matters of conformity assessment policy, standards development and practice as they relate to accreditation.
7. The scope of this MOU is alongside the roles and responsibilities that the parties already have towards each other, that arise from IAF and ILAC being liaison members of ISO committees, and of ISO having special recognition status within IAF and being an observer member of ILAC.



## **E. Areas of cooperation and responsibility**

### **E1 Identification and study of conformity assessment policy, standards development and practice issues**

8. The parties will work together to identify and study conformity assessment policies, standards development and practice issues of mutual interest.
9. The parties will discuss and mutually agree on which party should take the lead on any collaborative action in response to the issues identified.
10. With regard to ISO, the principal ISO committee for contact, cooperation and responsibility for this memorandum is the Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO). CASCO will facilitate communication with other relevant parts of ISO, including other committees and the ISO Central Secretariat as required.

### **E2 Participation in the development of international standards and guidance documents**

11. ILAC and IAF may contribute to and participate in the development and revision of appropriate ISO/IEC documents and ISO may contribute to and participate in the development and revision of appropriate IAF and ILAC documents.

### **E3 Creation, release and publicising joint IAF/ILAC/ISO communications**

12. The parties may work together to prepare, release and publicise joint IAF/ILAC/ISO communications on matters of joint interest and with other bodies as appropriate.
13. External communications in the name of all the parties shall be mutually agreed by all the parties prior to their publication.

## **F. Implementation and structures**

14. The above areas of cooperation shall be implemented through five (5) main mechanisms:
  - a) involvement of representatives in each other's technical work. As such the normal liaison and observer rules and procedures for input shall apply;
  - b) to achieve the identification, preliminary analysis, coordination, and division of responsibilities for dealing with issues, the parties agree to join together to maintain a Joint Working Group (JWG) that will act as a central clearinghouse;
  - c) the preparation, implementation and maintenance of mutually agreed projects that:
    - i) establish and implement procedures to share, transfer and enable the resolution of complaints by the party most appropriate;
    - ii) recommend improvements in relevant International Standards and Guides, implementation guidance and practice; and
    - iii) investigate and provide feedback to the parties and other relevant organizations;
  - d) attendance of an ISO representative(s) at the IAF and ILAC General Assemblies and related technical meetings, and attendance of IAF and ILAC representative(s) at the ISO/CASCO plenary (and other ISO technical committee plenary meetings if a formal liaison with that technical committees has been established) free from the payment of attendance fees; and



- e) adoption and annual review of a continuous three-year work program of mutually agreed actions by the parties.

## G. Commencement, termination and period of operation

15. This Memorandum will commence on the date of its signing and will remain in effect until terminated or amended. Any of the parties may, upon giving six (6) calendar months notice in writing of its intention to do so, terminate this Memorandum.
16. This MOU may be amended (including changes to the scope) if mutually agreed upon. Such changes shall be incorporated as a written change to the MOU, and the MOU will be reissued in full as a new version.
17. Any dispute arising out of the interpretation or implementation of this Memorandum will be settled amicably by consultation between the parties.

## H. Signatures and seals

Signed on behalf of the:

International Accreditation Forum (IAF)  
Dr. Thomas Facklam  
Chairman

2004 - 03 - 25

Date:

International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)  
Mr. Mike Peet  
Chairman

P.O. Daniel PIERAS  
Vice Chairman

Date:

2004.03.25

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)  
Mr. Alan Bryden  
Secretary General

Date:

2004.03.25