



# Arab Accreditation Cooperation [ARAC]

## Bylaws

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## Introduction

Given the importance of the accreditation activities within the Quality Infrastructure System, and with the aim to develop the accreditation activities in the Arab Countries and to facilitate trade, the accreditation axis of the Arab Standardization Strategy has included the establishing of the Arab Accreditation Cooperation. This decision has been taken by the Council of Minister of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization [AIDMO] during its 20<sup>th</sup> session held in Damascus during the period 14-18 June 2008, under the decision number 376.

The Arab Accreditation Cooperation [ARAC] is a non-profit organization acting with independence and impartiality in decision-making.

ARAC is a cooperation of the Accreditation Bodies in the Arab countries, its Multilateral Recognition Arrangement MLA is recognized by IAF and ILAC since 2017.

In compliance with the International requirements, ARAC members shall:

- do not work with commercial motives, and to avoid competition,
- do not work in conformity assessment activities.

## ARAC Bylaw and organizational Chart

### Article 1: The label and the legal entity of ARAC

These Bylaws define the formal structures and rules of procedure to be followed so that ARAC's objectives as set out in the Management System Documents are fulfilled.

Since 2021 ARAC is registered as non-profit organization in Dubai, UAE. The headquarters of ARAC Secretariat address will be located in the headquarters of one of ARAC Accreditation Body member. The Secretariat is totally independent from the hosted Accreditation Body.

### Article 2: Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in relevant standards and ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply:

**ARAC:** Arab Accreditation Cooperation

**Accreditation:** Third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body, conveying formal demonstration of its competence, consistent operation and impartiality in performing specific conformity assessment activities.

**Accreditation Body:** legally established and is operating in one economy or serves more than one economy in the Arab Region, and that can be accepted as ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement MLA signatories.

**IAF:** The International Accreditation Forum.

**ILAC:** The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation.

**ISO:** The International Organization for Standardization

**IEC:** The International Electro technical Commission

**Conformity Assessment:** demonstration that **specified requirements** relating to a **product** process, system, person or body are fulfilled.

**Conformity Assessment Body:** Body that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation

**Accreditation Certificate:** Formal document or a set of documents, stating that accreditation has been granted for a Conformity Assessment Body for the defined scope

**The ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA)** is a signed agreement between the ARAC Full Members whereby the signatories recognize and accept the equivalence of the accreditation systems operated by the signing members, and also the reliability of the conformity assessment results provided by conformity assessment bodies accredited by the signing members

### **Article 3: ARAC mission**

ARAC mission is to coordinate and develop the accreditation infrastructure among accreditation bodies in the Arab region with the aim to be internationally recognized. This is through the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA). ARAC ensures confidence in accredited conformity assessment results through harmonized operation of accreditation activities in support increasing economic efficiency in the Arab region and facilitating international trade.

### **Article 4: ARAC objective**

- To coordinate between all the accreditation activities in the regional Arab countries and help them develop and improve accreditation systems Through the achievement of recognition of ARAC with ILAC and IAF,
- Recognition of all conformity assessment certificates issued by the conformity assessment bodies accredited by the Arab Accreditation Bodies through the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA),
- To increase and promote the international acceptance of certificates and reports issued by the accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies signatory with ILAC and IAF,
- To develop, maintain, improve and expand the scopes of the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements ARAC MLA,

- To promote cooperation in training of peer evaluators and other personnel of accreditation bodies;
- To encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of applicable documents and guidelines that have been developed by IAF and ILAC;
- To facilitate collaboration, cooperation and mutual assistance among members by various means including seminars, meetings of experts and the sharing of information and experiences;
- To promote international acceptance of test, calibration, inspection reports and certificates and other documents issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by signatories to the ARAC MLA;
- To build up and to maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence among Full Members and to work towards further development of the ARAC multilateral recognition arrangement (MLA).

#### **Article 5: ARAC role**

1. Harmonization and unification of procedures and activities of the accreditation of the conformity assessment bodies,
2. Development of the Accreditation system in the Arab region, in compliance with the International requirements and takes into consideration the circumstances and needs of the Arab member states,
3. Sharing of experiences in the operation of accreditation bodies, and in the establishment of mutual recognition arrangements between Arab accreditation bodies,
4. Assist the current and potential ARAC members, and provide advice on matters related to accreditation of conformity assessment bodies through its Committees,
5. Harmonization of the ARAC members procedures according to ILAC and IAF requirements,
6. Implementing the ARAC Peer evaluation Process according to ILAC, IAF and ARAC requirements with the aim to sign the ARAC MLA,
7. Seek financial and institutional support from regional and international organizations to support ARAC and its members in the area of accreditation and conformity assessment.
8. Cooperation with the concerned international and regional organizations, and take advantage of their services in order to develop the training programs in the

field of accreditation and conformity assessment for the benefit of ARAC members.

## **Article 6: ARAC membership**

### **Item 1: ARAC membership categories**

A membership is divided into four categories and defines their rights and obligations under the ARAC implementing regulations:

- **Full member:**

All third party accreditation bodies, legally established and operating in the nations or bloc of nations in the Arab region and that have been accepted as ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement MLA signatories.

- **Associate member:**

Accreditation Bodies that provide, or are building their capacity to provide, accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 and relevant IAF and ILAC requirements and operating in the nations or bloc of nations in the Arab region.

- **Stakeholder members:**

International, regional and national organizations having an interest in the work of ARAC and include bodies such as associations of Conformity assessment bodies, purchasing organisations, regulatory authorities, consumer associations and trade organisations and having a significant membership from the Arab region economies and actively present in the Arab social and economic context.

Stakeholder Members are not eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

- **Affiliate member:**

Non-Arab accreditation bodies that are committed to operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC standards, guides and the relevant international documents of IAF and ILAC. Affiliate Members are eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

### **Item 2: ARAC membership conditions**

- a. Apply for ARAC membership,
- b. Participation at the General Assembly meetings and commitment to its resolutions,
- c. Giving feedback and vote on documents issued by ARAC,
- d. Maintaining confidentiality and the general objectives of ARAC, and non competition in the providing of accreditation services.

- e. To pay membership fees at a time which will be determined by the ARAC General Assembly.

### **Item 3: Suspension and withdraw of the membership in ARAC**

- a. Membership remains unless the General Assembly takes a decision of its termination or at the behest of the member to end its membership, with the explanation.
- b. The member who wants to terminate its membership, shall inform the Executive Committee two months before the termination of membership.
- c. The Executive Committee has the right to request the suspension of the membership of any ARAC member in the case of non-payment of membership fees or non-compliance with the membership conditions and requirements or any legal text issued by ARAC and presents it to the General Assembly for adoption.
- d. The Executive committee shall inform the suspended member on the decision and the reasons of this decision and determine the date of this suspension. The suspended member has the right to submit its appeal according to ARAC rules.

### **Article 7: ARAC Organizational Chart**

The ARAC organizational structure consists of the following:

1. General Assembly,
2. Executive Committee,
3. ARAC Secretariat,
4. Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) Committee,
5. MLA Group,
6. Technical Committee,
7. Communication and Marketing Committee,
8. Capacity Building Committee
9. Any other committees being developed.

The organisational structure of ARAC is described in the ARAC Quality Manual ARAC AD 003.

### **Article 8: ARAC General Assembly**

#### **Item 1: Definition**

The General Assembly is the highest authority of ARAC. It is comprised of the all ARAC members.



## **Item 2: Tasks**

The General Assembly is specialized in policy-making decisions and issuing directives that help to abide the policy of ARAC and oversees the administration and enforcement of the internal regulations of ARAC in addition to the general issues related to its work.

The ARAC GA has the authority, especially:

1. Elect the Chair, Vice Chair and Committees Chairs from the full members,
2. Define and approve the policies and strategic plan of ARAC,
3. Approve the fees, financial statements, and annual budget of ARAC,
4. Approval of formation of committee, including technical and consulting committees, as needed, and election of their chair and approve the Terms of Reference of these committees and their Work Plans,
5. Approval of the revision on the ARAC bylaws,
6. Validation of the ARAC activities reports and agreements to be concluded,
7. Delegate any of its functions and terms of reference of the General Assembly contained in this article to the Executive Committee,
8. Approval of the ARAC regulations and Technical Procedures,
9. Approval of the draft resolutions and recommendations of all ARAC committees,
10. Elect the Treasurer from among the full members,
11. Approve the admission of new members,
12. Review and approve the reports of the ARAC Chair and committees Chairs.

### **Item 3: ARAC GA meetings**

1. Shall meet normally once a year, in person or virtually, and can meet extraordinarily, in the event of exceptional circumstances, as requested by the ARAC Chair or by a request of third of the votes ARAC members;
2. Shall have quorum and begin its meeting when two thirds of its full members is present, whether in person or by its proxy,
3. To invite persons or organizations to attend and observe all or part of the ARAC General Assembly or an Executive Committee meeting that does not have a right to vote,
4. The results of the meetings of the General Assembly shall be issued in the form of resolutions,
5. If there is a need for a decision or to submit a document for approval by the ARAC members between GeneralAssembly meetings, the Secretariat will follow the corresponding procedure for voting out of session,
6. A Member who is entitled to attend and cast a vote at a meeting of the General Assembly may appoint a person as the Member's proxy to attend and vote for the Member at the meeting instead of their designated representative by submitting to the Executive Committee and Secretariat at least 24 hours prior to the meeting a properly completed Proxy Appointment Form. The proxy's authority to vote is suspended whilst the Member or the Member's designated representative is also present at the Meeting

### **Item 4: Voting**

ARAC full and associate members have the right of voting on the basis of one vote per member, whether in person or by proxy. Decisions shall be issued by a majority of two-thirds of the members present.

### **Article 9: ARAC Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee is constituted and operates according to the Terms of Reference ARAC AD 020 approved by the General Assembly.

### **Article 10: ARAC Chair and Vice Chair**

#### **Item 1: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ARAC**

The ARAC Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected, from ARAC full members, by the General Assembly for a three-year term and may be reelected for a second consecutive term.

## **Item 2: Tasks of ARAC Chair**

It is the responsibility of the Chair:

1. To chair the ARAC General Assembly and Executive Committee and follow up the implementation of all actions approved by the General Assembly and Executive committee,
2. To represent ARAC at Arab, regional, and international organizations of interest,
3. To follow up the preparation of ARAC regulations and Technical Guidelines before the approval by the General Assembly,
4. To negotiate and sign agreements approved by the ARAC General Assembly ,
5. Any other tasks entrusted to him/her by the ARAC General Assembly.

## **Item 3: Tasks of ARAC Vice-Chair**

It is the responsibility of the Vice Chair:

1. To assist the Chair in fulfilling his/her duties;
2. To substitute for the Chair in his/her absence.

## **Article 11: ARAC Treasurer**

### **Item 1: Election of ARAC treasurer**

Candidates to the positions of ARAC Treasurer shall be notified to the ARAC Secretariat, at least three months before the election, as far as possible. Nominations shall be made by full members only. Candidates shall provide an official letter of support from his/her organization. The Treasurer shall be elected for a two-year term and may be reelected for consecutive terms.

When the person serving as ARAC Treasurer, she/he shall be replaced by a person appointed by the Executive Committee until the next General Assembly meeting during which new officer shall be elected

### **Item 2: Tasks of the ARAC treasurer**

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to:

1. Prepare ARAC financial status report for approval by the General Assembly;
2. Propose to the General Assembly the budget for the following year as well as present prior year(s) financial statements;
3. Propose to the General Assembly a different membership fee structure, when deemed necessary;
4. Manage the financial audits, as necessary;
5. Propose actions for the best management of ARAC financial resources.

## **Article 12: ARAC Secretariat**

**Item 1: Definition:**

ARAC Secretariat can be based in the headquarters of the host Accreditation Body.

**Item 2: Tasks of the ARAC Secretariat**

It is the main responsibility of the ARAC Secretariat:

1. To do the daily business of ARAC;
2. To coordinate with ARAC members and follow up the implementation regarding the actions approved by the ARAC General Assembly and Executive Committee and to;
3. To maintain a system for documents and records control;
4. To prepare the ARAC General Assembly, Executive Committee, MLAG & MLAC meetings and their minutes;
5. To represent ARAC to the judicial and legal authorities;
6. Keep the members informed about major issues submitted to the Secretariat between General Assembly meetings;
7. Keep the ARAC membership directory updated;
8. Maintain the system for documents and records control;
9. Receive and answer correspondence sent to ARAC;
10. Maintain the information on the ARAC website and IT solutions updated.
11. Any other tasks entrusted by the ARAC General Assembly.

**Article 13: ARAC Meetings**

ARAC Committees meetings held in the country of the Secretariat Headquarters and can be held in one of ARAC full members or associate members country upon request. ARAC GA and Committees meetings may take place online

**Article 14: Regulations**

The ARAC Executive Committee prepare one or more Technical Regulations related to the implementation of this Bylaws which to be approved by the ARAC General Assembly.

**Article 15: ARAC Budget****Item 1: Financial Resources**

The resources of ARAC budget consist of membership fees and unconditional aid or grants and other resources approved by the General Assembly which shall not affect the independence and impartiality of ARAC.

## **Item 2: The financial year and the final accounts**

- The ARAC fiscal year begins on January 1, ending December 31 of each calendar year;
- The Executive Committee prepares and presents the draft budget and final accounts to the ARAC General Assembly for approval.

## **Article 16: Dissolution of ARAC**

The General Assembly may determine the dissolution of ARAC only if it has been specifically convened for this purpose and if it is approved by an affirmative vote with unanimous by all the members. ARAC will continue to perform its work until the start of its dissolution.

## **Article 17: General provisions**

1. This Bylaw is applied from the date of its approval during the first meeting of the ARAC General Assembly ;
2. This Bylaw is modified according to the second item of Article Seven and ARAC Document Control Procedure, upon request of one of ARAC full members or ARAC Chair or Committee Chairs and with the approval of two-thirds of the full members of the ARAC General Assembly. ARAC Chair sends to ARAC full members the modifications at least one month before the ARAC General Assembly meeting,
3. The resolutions issued by the Executive Committee and other committees shall be endorsed by the General Assembly, with the exception of MLA Committee resolutions, which are final and not subject to further review,
4. If there is a need for a decision or to submit a document for approval by the ARAC members between General Assembly meetings, the Secretariat will follow the corresponding procedure for voting out of session.