

## **ARAC Strategy 2026–2030**

### **I. Foreword**

We are living in fascinating but also challenging times. The scale of issues we face is enormous: environmental sustainability, rapid technological change, geopolitical tensions, public health crises, and growing social and economic inequalities all affect our daily lives.

A sustainable and resilient development of our economies is essential to address today's challenges and to seize the opportunities of our time.

ARAC, with its mission and vision, plays a vital role in supporting resilient and sustainable economies across all our member states. The strategic plan for 2026–2030 charts a clear path to further strengthen trade, societal well-being, the health of citizens, and environmental protection.

This strategy will transform not only what we do but also how we work externally and internally. We will deepen our engagement with our members, stakeholders, and international partners. Internally, we aim to become an even more agile, innovative, and digitally enabled organization. We will continue to improve our core processes, communication, and services to maintain excellent relationships and to develop new initiatives where they are needed most.

A rapidly changing world demands innovation and collaboration from all organizations operating at the regional and international level. This strategic plan ensures that ARAC and its stakeholders will thrive in these complex times, continuing to deliver trust, reliability, and confidence in everyday life. It lays the foundation for the next phase of our successful journey, which began in June 2012.

I invite all our members and stakeholders to join us in facing the challenges and opportunities ahead, and to help build the next chapter of sustainability, resilience, and prosperity for our member countries and our region.

### **II. Abbreviations**

### **III. Who We Are, What We Do, What We Provide**

The Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) is the regional cooperation body for the Arab region, officially established on June 12, 2012. ARAC is a key pillar of the Arab Quality Infrastructure (QI), uniting 22 Arab countries under a common vision of fostering trust, safety, and sustainable development through internationally recognized accreditation services.

#### **Who We Are**

- A regional organization coordinating the efforts of designated accreditation bodies (ABs) across the Arab world.
- A recognized partner of global accreditation networks including Global Cooperation, and other regional groups.
- A bridge between regional priorities and international best practices, ensuring the Arab region's voice is heard on the global stage.

## What We Do

- **Support Accreditation Systems:** We strengthen accreditation bodies through harmonization, capacity building, and cooperation, helping to reinforce quality infrastructures that protect consumers and promote economic development.
- **Facilitate Trade:** By ensuring mutual recognition of accreditation results, we reduce technical barriers to trade, helping businesses access regional and global markets more efficiently.
- **Provide Peer Evaluations:** We coordinate and perform rigorous peer evaluations to uphold the competence and credibility of accreditation bodies in the region.
- **Promote Harmonization:** We develop regional policies, guidelines, and technical documents to ensure consistency and harmonization of accreditation practices.
- **Support Regulators:** We work closely with regulatory authorities to integrate accreditation into legal frameworks, improving regulatory oversight and public confidence.
- **Build Capacity:** We design and deliver capacity-building programs, training, and knowledge-sharing initiatives for accreditation bodies, conformity assessment bodies, regulators, and stakeholders.
- **Drive Innovation:** We monitor emerging trends and proactively support the harmonized adoption of accreditation practices in new and evolving areas such as sustainability, digital technologies, and advanced healthcare services, ensuring that accreditation remains responsive and future-ready.

## What We Provide

- **Recognition and Trust:** ARAC provides the assurance that accredited conformity assessment services across member countries meet international standards of competence and impartiality.
- **Confidence for Markets and Consumers:** Accredited services give businesses and consumers confidence in products, services, and systems, supporting safer markets and informed decision-making.
- **Technical Expertise:** Through technical committees and working groups, ARAC offers expertise and leadership in developing solutions for new and complex accreditation challenges.
- **Access to International Agreements:** ARAC facilitates the integration of its members into global mutual recognition agreements, providing pathways for international trade and cooperation.
- **Digital Transformation Support:** ARAC increasingly offers digital tools and platforms to improve the efficiency and accessibility of accreditation processes and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Research and Knowledge Sharing:** We promote studies and research to demonstrate the economic and social benefits of accreditation and to guide evidence-based policy decisions.

- **Collaboration Opportunities:** ARAC serves as a collaborative hub, connecting accreditation bodies, regulators, industry, academia, and international partners for collective progress in quality infrastructure.

ARAC’s work is fundamental for building resilient, sustainable, and innovation-driven economies across the Arab region. Through close partnerships and continual improvement, we ensure that accreditation remains a trusted pillar supporting both national priorities and global integration.

#### **IV. Our Mission**

To be the essential pillar of the QI in the Arab Region, ensuring harmonized, reliable, sustainable, and efficient accreditation systems resulting in competent and internationally recognized conformity assessment services, while proactively engaging with stakeholders to enable sustainable economic growth, and societal well-being.

#### **V. Our Vision**

The leading regional accreditation cooperation in the Arab region, recognized globally for advancing innovation and sustainable development, while facilitating safe and trade for the benefit of economies, societies, and consumers.

#### **VI. Our Core Values**

- **Integrity**
- **Transparency**
- **Collaboration**
- **Innovation**
- **Sustainability**
- **Inclusiveness**

#### **VII. ARAC Strategy 2026–2030 – Strategic Activities**

The ARAC Strategy 2026–2030 sets a clear path for strengthening the Arab region’s quality infrastructure and supporting sustainable economic growth. It focuses on expanding recognition in new sectors, enhancing digital transformation, deepening partnerships, and building the capacity and innovation needed to respond to emerging challenges. This strategy ensures ARAC remains a trusted partner for trade, safety, and development in an evolving global landscape.

#### **Pillar 1 — International Recognition and Market Responsiveness**

##### **Strategic Goals:**

- Expand ARAC MLA scopes to cover emerging sectors.
- Increase MLA signatories and deepen confidence in the MLA.
- Align ARAC services with evolving market and regulatory needs.

##### **Strategic Activities**

## 1. Emerging Scopes Roadmap

- Develop a rolling 5-year roadmap for new MLA scopes:
  - ESG and sustainability reporting verification
  - Artificial Intelligence testing and certification
  - Digital Twin and Smart Manufacturing
  - Cybersecurity management systems
  - Advanced healthcare and biotechnology

## 2. Evaluator Specialization Programs

- Launch specialized training for evaluators in:
  - New technology schemes
  - Cross-sector standards (e.g. sustainability intersecting multiple industries)
  - Risk-based evaluation techniques

## 3. MLA Expansion Support Program

- Provide tailored assistance to developing ABs, including:
  - “Buddy” partnerships with mature ABs
  - Pre-MLA readiness evaluations
  - Workshops on MLA requirements and peer evaluations

## 4. Stakeholder-Driven Scheme Development

- Establish working groups with industry and regulators to:
  - Identify high-priority accreditation needs
  - Co-develop guidance for new schemes

## 5. Market Intelligence Hub

- Monitor regional and international trends to:
  - Predict new areas of accreditation demand
  - Inform ARAC’s priorities for scope expansion

## 6. Recognition Advocacy

- Conduct campaigns highlighting:
  - The role of ARAC MLA in reducing technical barriers to trade
  - Benefits of relying on ARAC MLA for regulatory acceptance

## Pillar 2 — Operational Excellence and Digital Transformation

### Strategic Goals:

- Ensure ARAC’s operations are efficient, transparent, innovative, and sustainable.
- Drive digital transformation across all ARAC processes, services, and member engagement.
- Strengthen data-driven decision-making and digital infrastructure to support new scopes and services.

### New Strategic Activities

#### 1. Digital Transformation Blueprint

- Develop a comprehensive ARAC Digital Transformation Strategy covering:
  - Virtual peer evaluations
  - Online collaboration platforms
  - Digital records and document management
  - Data protection and cybersecurity measures
- Engage external digital transformation experts to guide implementation.

## **2. AI and Data Analytics Integration**

- Implement AI-powered tools for:
  - Peer evaluation analysis and reporting
  - Predictive analytics on emerging accreditation needs
  - Digital document translation and summarization
- Create interactive dashboards for real-time monitoring of:
  - MLA scopes
  - Training progress
  - Stakeholder engagement metrics

## **3. Digital Learning Ecosystem**

- Develop an ARAC e-learning platform offering:
  - Interactive courses on new accreditation areas (AI, cybersecurity, ESG)
  - Webinars and virtual workshops
  - Programs for assessors and ABs member staff
- Incorporate AI-based adaptive learning tools for personalized training experiences.

## **4. Cybersecurity and Data Privacy**

- Conduct a cybersecurity risk assessment of ARAC's digital systems.
- Establish protocols for secure handling of sensitive data (including peer evaluation reports).
- Provide cybersecurity awareness training for ARAC staff and members.

## **5. Sustainability Integration into Operations**

- Implement digital systems to track and report ARAC's environmental footprint (carbon emissions from travel, virtual meetings vs. in-person, etc.).
- Develop sustainable event guidelines promoting virtual participation and paperless documentation.
- Integrate ESG criteria into ARAC's operational planning.

## **6. Process Optimization and Innovation**

- Map all core processes and identify opportunities for:
  - Automation
  - Time reduction
  - Cost savings
- Introduce digital tools for workflow management and document approval tracking.

- Create an internal “Innovation Task Force” to propose new digital solutions annually.

## 7. Digital Member Engagement Hub

- Launch a digital portal offering:
  - Centralized communication with members
  - Live chat support for queries
  - Document sharing and collaborative editing
  - Notifications about trainings, events, and updates
- Enable secure, member-only spaces for working groups and technical committees.

## 8. Virtual Events and Hybrid Conferences

- Standardize hybrid meeting formats to ensure inclusivity and reduce travel costs.
- Invest in high-quality virtual conferencing tools to:
  - Facilitate workshops and committees
  - Enhance networking opportunities online

## 9. Knowledge Management System

- Build a digital library of:
  - Technical documents
  - Peer evaluation reports (redacted versions for learning purposes)
  - Studies and research outcomes
- Implement smart search and AI tagging to simplify knowledge retrieval.

## 10. Monitoring and Continual Improvement

- Establish digital dashboards to:
  - Track KPIs related to operational efficiency and digital transformation
  - Provide transparency to the General Assembly and stakeholders
- Introduce regular “Digital Transformation Reviews” to adjust priorities based on new technologies and feedback.

## Pillar 3 — Cooperation and Partnership

### Strategic Goals:

- Deepen collaboration with regulators and stakeholders.
- Enhance ARAC’s influence and reputation regionally and globally.
- Promote research and knowledge-sharing across the QI ecosystem.

### Strategic Activities

#### 1. Stakeholder Advisory Forum

- Establish a formal forum engaging:
  - Regulators
  - Industry groups
  - Academia
  - Civil society

- Meet at least annually to:
  - Review ARAC initiatives
  - Identify emerging issues
  - Co-create solutions
  
- 2. Regulator Engagement Plan**
  - Develop structured relationships with regulators through:
    - Regular consultations
    - Technical workshops on accreditation's role in regulation
    - Joint publications and guidance documents
  
- 3. Regional and International Partnerships**
  - Strengthen ties with:
    - Global Accreditation Cooperation
    - Regional Accreditation Groups
    - United Nations Industrial Development Organisation UNIDO
    - International accreditation cooperation bodies
  - Pursue collaborative activities such as:
    - Joint studies and research
    - Benchmarking exercises
  
  - Enhance cooperation mechanisms through:
    - Joint peer-evaluation activities with other regional groups and global partners
    - Active participation in international committees, working groups, and task forces to ensure alignment with global best practices
    - Effective implementation of MoUs signed with partner organizations (e.g., through annual workplans, progress tracking, and co-hosted activities)
  
- 4. Marketing and Visibility Campaign**
  - Launch an ARAC branding strategy:
    - Social media presence
    - Digital newsletters
    - Participation in high-profile QI events
  - Showcase success stories where accreditation has delivered economic or social value.
  
- 5. Research and Studies Hub**
  - Initiate research projects on:
    - Economic impact of accreditation in Arab economies
    - Benefits of accreditation in new sectors (e.g. AI, sustainability)
    - Forecast the future needs of the accreditation in the Arab region.
  - Partner with universities for co-funded research.

## 6. Youth in Accreditation Initiative

- Partner with universities and technical institutes to:
  - Promote careers in accreditation
  - Offer internships with ABs and ARAC Secretariat
  - Host student competitions on QI topics

## 7. Joint Events and Training

- Organize:
  - Regional accreditation days
  - Stakeholder dialogue sessions
  - Sector-specific workshops on emerging topics

## Pillar 4 — Capacity Building and Innovation

### Strategic Goals:

- Equip members with skills for emerging accreditation demands.
- Foster innovation across ARAC and its members.
- Ensure accessible and impactful capacity-building programs.

### Strategic Activities

#### 1. Digital Learning Platform

- Enhance the ARAC e-learning portal offering:
  - On-demand courses
  - Capacity Building programs in specialized fields

#### 2. Training Needs Assessment

- Conduct annual surveys to:
  - Identify member training gaps
  - Prioritize topics (e.g. ESG verification, cybersecurity, AI)

#### 3. Innovation Labs

- Establish ARAC Innovation Labs to:
  - Explore new accreditation models
  - Pilot digital tools for accreditation and conformity assessment
  - Create prototypes for process improvements

#### 4. Peer Mentorship Network

- Pair mature ABs with emerging ABs for:
  - Hands-on coaching
  - Shadowing in peer evaluations
  - Sharing operational resources

#### 5. Knowledge Sharing Repository

- Develop a digital library for:
  - Case studies

- Best practice guides
- Peer evaluation reports (anonymized)

#### **6. Financial Support for Capacity Building**

- Pursue donor funding to:
  - Support training for low-resourced ABs
  - Subsidize attendance at international conferences
  - Enable participation in new peer evaluation scopes

### **VIII. Conclusion**

ARAC's Strategy 2026–2030 is a forward-looking framework designed to ensure ARAC remains at the forefront of regional and global accreditation developments. It responds directly to stakeholder needs and positions ARAC as a catalyst for sustainable development, digital innovation, and economic resilience across the Arab region.