



# ARAC

ARAB ACCREDITATION COOPERATION

الجهاز العربي للاعتماد

Delivering confidence in the Quality Infrastructure  
of the ARAB Region



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



### ARAC CHAIR

Mrs Amina Ahmad

The Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) is the regional cooperation among accreditation bodies in the Arab region, which **coordinates and develops the accreditation infrastructure** with the aim of being **internationally recognized**. Through the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA), ARAC facilitates the **acceptance of the results of conformity assessment services** in one country by Regulators and the market place in another country without further examination, for the benefit of the Arab community and the global economy.

ARAC was established by the Ministerial Decree of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) in June 2008. Following the 95th Ministerial Economic and Social Council meeting of the League of Arab States (LAS), held on 19th February 2015 in LAS headquarters, Cairo, Egypt, the Ministerial Economic and Social Council has recognized ARAC as **one of the main pillars of the Pan Arab quality infrastructure** in supporting intra-regional trade and the Arab Customs Union requirements.

Since October 2017, the ARAC MLA is internationally recognized by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

The current membership includes 20 members covering 18 Arab countries: **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates & Yemen.**



ARAC safeguards internationally the value and credibility of accreditation delivered by ARAC members and services provided by accredited conformity assessment bodies within the Arab market, supporting Arab countries to facilitate trade, enhance health & safety, protect the environment and provide consumer protection



## ARAC MAIN OBJECTIVES



- » 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 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 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.

### THE ROLE OF ACCREDITATION

All countries, and all market sectors, have seen an increase in the number of technical regulations, standards, testing and certification procedures. Generally, these are introduced to meet the requirements of quality and safety that consumers, businesses and regulators demand of goods and services. The increasing number of specified standards has seen a corresponding growth in the number of organizations providing third-party evaluation of conformity and compliance with these standards.

The accreditation process determines the **competence, impartiality** and **consistent** operations of organizations that offer conformity assessment activities. Accreditation operates in the public interest across all market sectors, **providing a transparent assessment of these services**, against internationally recognized standards and other national or sectorial requirements.







# ARAC STRUCTURE



The organizational structure of ARAC currently includes a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, Secretariat, Technical Committee, MLA Committee and Communication & Marketing Committee.

There are also working groups that are assembled on demand like the Mapping Group that was assembled for the purpose of mapping the regional countries to provide roadmaps for their accreditation system development.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

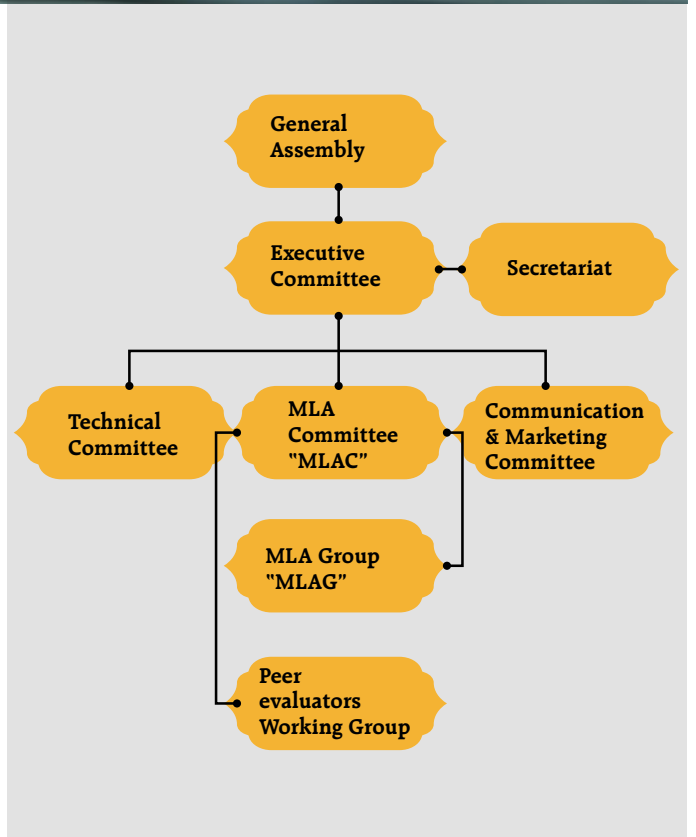
The ARAC GA is the highest authority of ARAC. It is comprised of all ARAC members.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee consists of ARAC Chair, ARAC Committees Chairs, ARAC vice Chair, one member from ARAC associate members, who will be elected by their representatives, and maximum two members from ARAC full members, elected by the ARAC General Assembly, for a two-year term renewable one time, while ensuring balanced representation of members and benefit from the expertise available at the organizational and technical level.

**In October 2018, the ARAC GA elected its new Executive Committee composed of representatives of the following members: Mrs Amina Ahmad (EIAC), Mr Moteb Mezani (GAC), Mrs Lana Marashdah (JAS), Mr Talal Harafsheh (JAS), Mr Brahim Houla (GAC), Mr Yassine Wali (TUNAC), Mr Kamal El Hadi (SDAC) and Mr Ali Salama (SAC).**

*From left to right : Brahim Houla, Talal Harafsheh, Yassine Wali, Moteb Mezani, Amina Ahmad, Lana Marashdah, Kamal El Hadi.*





**ARAC CHAIR**  
**Mrs Amina Ahmad**

The main functions of the Chair is to represent ARAC in the Arab, regional and international community and supervise furtherance of the objectives, aims and tasks of ARAC, and oversee the implementation of ARAC policy and management.



**ARAC VICE CHAIR**  
**Mr Moteb Mezani**

The main function of the Vice Chair is to represent the chair and help in developing and formulating initiatives that support the accomplishment of ARAC objectives and strategies.



**ARAC SECRETARIAT**  
**Mr Moslem Barrak**

The main responsibility of the ARAC Secretariat is to coordinate with ARAC members and follow up the implementation of resolutions and maintain the system of ARAC documents and records.



**MLA COMMITTEE**  
**Mrs Lana Marashdah**

The MLA Committee main objectives are :

- » Implement and maintain policies and operational procedures of the ARAC MLA;
- » Identify specific needs for development and continual improvement of ARAC MLA.



**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
**Mr Talal Harashfa**

The ARAC Technical Committee is the forum for the discussions of all matters related to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies.



**CMC COMMITTEE**  
**Mr Brahim Houla**

The ARAC CMC main objective is to provide support to the development of ARAC's activities in all issues related to promotion, internal and external communications.

## ARAC MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

**The 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, that declare in the membership application that they are committed to operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC standards, guides and the relevant international documents of IAF and ILAC.
- » **Associate member:**
  - Relevant organizations in the nations or bloc of nations of the Arab region intending to become accreditation bodies where no accreditation body has been established and operating;
- Other international, regional and national organizations that are interested in conformity assessment and accreditation and are not included in the Stakeholder Member category.
- » **Stakeholder members:** International, regional and national organizations having an interest in the work of ARAC and include bodies such as associations of Conformity assessment body associations, purchasing organizations, regulatory authorities, consumer associations and trade organizations and having a significant membership from the Arab region economies and actively present in the Arab social and economic context.
- » **Affiliate member:** Non-Arab accreditation bodies which are committed to operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC standards, guides and the relevant international documents of IAF and ILAC.



# ARAC MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA)

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.

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE ARAC MLA

- » In December 2012, ARAC has been accepted by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) as Regional Cooperation Body and in September 2013 as an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Special Recognition Organization - Regional Accreditation Group Member.
- » In October 2017, **the ARAC MLA is internationally recognized by ILAC and IAF.**



*Signing Ceremony ARAC ILAC and IAF (Vancouver, Canada, ILAC IAF General Assembly 2017)*

Following this decision, the regional accreditation cooperation ARAC MLA became internationally recognized in the following accreditation scopes:

- » **International recognition of the ARAC MLA by ILAC:**
  - » Accreditation of testing laboratories according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17025;
  - » Accreditation of calibration laboratories according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17025;
  - » Accreditation of medical testing laboratories according to the international standard ISO 15189;
  - » Accreditation of inspection bodies according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17020.
- » **International recognition of the ARAC MLA by IAF:**
  - » Accreditation of Quality Management Systems (QMS) certification bodies according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17021-1;
  - » Accreditation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) certification bodies according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17021-1;
  - » Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) certification bodies according to the international standards ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO/TS 22003;

As a result of this great achievement, the ARAC MLA Signatories members are systematically internationally recognised by IAF and ILAC based on their recognition by ARAC MLA.



**ILAC** is the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation for laboratories, inspection, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers' accreditation bodies, formed more than 30 years ago to help remove technical barriers to trade.



**IAF** is the world association of Conformity Assessment Accreditation Bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment.

Based on the international recognition of the ARAC MLA, the reports or certificates accredited by an ARAC MLA signatory are also recognized by the signatories to the ILAC and IAF MRA & MLA agreements.

As a result, the ARAC MLA acts as an **international passport to trade.**





# ARAC MLA SIGNATORIES



Among 12 ARAC full members, 4 are ARAC MLA signatories:



**Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC)**



**Emirates International Accreditation Center (EIAC)**



**GCC Accreditation Center (GAC)**



**Jordanian Accreditation System (JAS)**

For more information, visit:

<http://arac-accreditation.org/signatories>

The ARAC MLA covers the accreditation of:



**Testing laboratories**



**Environmental Management Systems (EMS) certification bodies**



**Medical testing laboratories**



**Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) certification bodies**



**Calibration laboratories**



**Inspection bodies**



**Quality Management Systems (QMS) certification bodies**



**Product certification bodies**

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

ARAC has signed technical cooperation agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the majority of the recognized regional cooperation bodies operating at international level, and work in close cooperation with the remaining ones.



In the margin of the ILAC and IAF General Assembly in Seoul, Korea, ARAC and Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) signed a MoU on 24th October 2013.



In the margin of the 3rd ARAC General Assembly held on 22nd May 2014 in Dubai, UAE, a MoU between ARAC and European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), the Regional Group of national accreditation bodies in Europe, has been signed by the two organization's Chairs.



ARAC and African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) signed a technical cooperation agreement on 25th March 2013 in the margin of the first ARAC International conference held in Marrakech, Morocco.



During the ARAC regional workshop, organized in Amman, Jordan, in the days 17 -18 June 2012, the ARAC and the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) signed a technical cooperation agreement.



In the margin of the ILAC and IAF General Assembly in Milan, Italy, ARAC and Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) signed a MoU on 5th November 2015.





## WHO BENEFITS FROM THE ARAC MLA?



### GOVERNMENTS AND REGULATORS

The ARAC MLA provides a framework that allows Governments to rely on data from accredited organizations in other countries. **Accreditation minimizes risk** as decisions can be based on **reliable certificates or reports** and there can be **greater confidence** in the data being used to establish baselines for monitoring and enforcement.



### INDUSTRY AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Businesses can differentiate their services by providing **evidence of technical competence, impartiality and compliance with international requirements** within their supply chain.



### CONSUMERS

Accreditation can impact positively on all aspects of our daily life from the **safety of the products** we buy to the **quality of the environment** we live in. The accreditation of testing, inspection and certification ensures that these activities are carried out by competent organizations.



### HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC

Accreditation plays an important part in the health, **safety** and **well-being** of the public. Assurance that the test reports are **reliable**, that it **conforms** to the requirements of the specific test, is supported by accreditation.





## BACKGROUND ON THE AIDMO-UNIDO-SIDA PROJECT



In response to a request from the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) and with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) developed a **technical support program** to support AIDMO in the implementation of the Regional Quality Infrastructure Strategy targeting the regional cooperation in accreditation as the main focus.

- » ensuring that ARAC, as a regional cooperation body, is legally incorporated, technically and financially sustainable and internationally recognized.
- » supporting up to 4 ARAC members to become ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) signatories.



The project aimed at achieving **regional integration, harmonization and effective coordination in the quality infrastructure** ensuring compliance with international trade rules and regulations, through the establishment and/or strengthening existing regional support of standardization, conformity assessment and accreditation in order to achieve **international levels of quality** for Arab products and services.

As a result of intensive and thorough work of ARAC members, supported by UNIDO, AIDMO and SIDA during the phase one of the project ("Support the implementation of the regional Arab Standardization Strategy with focus on the regional coordination on accreditation", implemented from 2011 to 2016), ARAC MLA became **internationally recognized by ILAC and IAF**.

The second phase of the project started in June 2018 for a duration of 24 months, with a total budget of USD 3 million. This new phase will be aiming at:









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