International Accreditation Forum
Multilateral Recognition Arrangement

Annual Report
2023

IAF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FORUM

Accredited Once,
Accepted Everywhere

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The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and its Accreditation Body (AB) Members invest significant effort and resources to maintain the integrity and consistency of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) through a peer evaluation process. This report sets out the detailed activities that are carried out as part of the peer evaluation process to ensure that regulators, specifiers, and businesses can have confidence in the MLA.

The focus of this document is to report on the activities undertaken by IAF, in collaboration with ILAC, and the evaluation activities undertaken by these organisations or the Regional Accreditation Groups (RAGs). This report also outlines the activities of the IAF MLA Committee (MLAC) and the IAF MLA Management Committee (MLA MC) in collaboration with ILAC under the Joint Management Committee (JMC).

The IAF MLA

The purpose of the IAF MLA is to provide users in countries with ABs that are IAF MLA signatories with the assurance that equivalent Certification Bodies (CBs) and Validation/Verification Bodies (VVBs) in other economies operate to the same standards as those in their own economies for certificates and statements in the fields of:

Management Systems Certification

Product Certification (including processes and services)

Certification of Persons

Validation and Verification

Accreditations granted by IAF MLA AB signatories are recognised worldwide based on their equivalent accreditation programmes, therefore reducing costs and adding value to industry and consumers.

The MLA contributes to the facilitation of world trade by eliminating technical barriers. IAF works to find the most effective way of achieving a single system to meet the objective of "Accredited once, accepted everywhere".

The IAF MLA Mark

Accreditation Body Logo

The IAF MLA Mark can be used by ABs to demonstrate their status as a signatory to the IAF MLA. If approved by the AB, accredited CBs and VVBs can also use the IAF MLA Mark in combination with the accreditation symbol on their certificates or statements, provided that the certificates or statements are issued under a granted IAF MLA scope.

The IAF MLA Mark demonstrates that the certificate or statement has been issued by a CB or VVB that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory and is thus traceable to the highest authority. It is an assurance that the certificate or statement and the issuing body are of a high standard of competence and may be trusted, as they are recognised as complying with the same set of standards at the global level.

Changes in the Scope of the IAF MLA During 2023

2023 witnessed a significant increase in the size of the IAF MLA. 10 private sector schemes were endorsed as new IAF MLA sub-scopes:

◦ BRC Global Standard – Food Safety Issue 8 (9)
◦ BRC Global Standard – Agents and Brokers Issue 3
◦ BRC Global Standard – Packaging Materials Issue 6
◦ BRC Global Standard – Storage and Distribution Issue 4
◦ BRC Global Standard – Gluten Free Certification Program, Issue 3
◦ BRC Global Standard – Consumer Products – Personal Care and Household, Issue 4
◦ BRC Global Standard – Consumer Products – General Merchandise, Issue 4
◦ IFS Food Version 7 (8)
◦ IAQG Industry Controlled Other Party (ICOP) Certification Scheme
◦ GLOBALG.A.P. PHA General Regulations V1.0

Additionally, the scheme endorsement agreement for IPC Management System Auditors was renewed.

At the end of 2023, 08 private schemes were under evaluation against the requirements of **IAF PL3 Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA:**

- WSO Friend of the Sea Certification Scheme
- FSSC 24000 certification scheme
- IFS PAC Secure V3
- ECCP Europrivacy scheme
- IFS Logistics Certification Scheme V3
- IFS Broker scheme V3.2
- GLOBALG.A.P. IFA version 06
- BRC GS Ethical Trade and Responsible Sourcing issue 2.

The following public schemes were under review at the end of 2023:

- ISO 37001:2016 – **Anti-bribery management systems** (as a level 5 sub-scope)
- ISO 37301:2021 – **Compliance management systems – requirements with guidance for use** (as a level 5 sub-scope)

Transitions

The transition period for ISO 50003:2021 – **Energy management systems – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of energy management systems** ended on 30 November 2023, in accordance with IAF MD 24.

The IAF MLA transition to ISO/IEC 17029:2019 – **Conformity assessment – General principles and requirements for validation and verification bodies** remained in progress, with endorsed schemes and signatory ABs required to transition to that standard by 30 June 2024. The transition process for RAGs was approved by the General Assembly by IAF Resolution 2023-27, allowing applications for transitions to be progressed.

Other transition processes underway at the end of 2023 included the following:

- ISO 14065:2020 – **General principles and requirements for bodies validating and verifying environmental information** - 3 years (IAF Resolution 2019-19) end of 31 December 2023 - extended to 30 June 2024
- ISO/IEC 27001:2022 – **Information security, cybersecurity and privacy protection - Information security management systems – Requirements** - IAF MD 26 – 31 October 2025
- ISO 22003-1:2022 - **Food safety – Part 1: Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems** - IAF MD 27 – 30 June 2025

Annex 1 shows the status of the IAF MLA at the end of 2023. The current status of the IAF MLA is available in IAF MLA Status.

The IAF MLA Status document can be found in the 'About the IAF MLA' section of the IAF website: https://iaf.nu/en/about-iaf-mla/
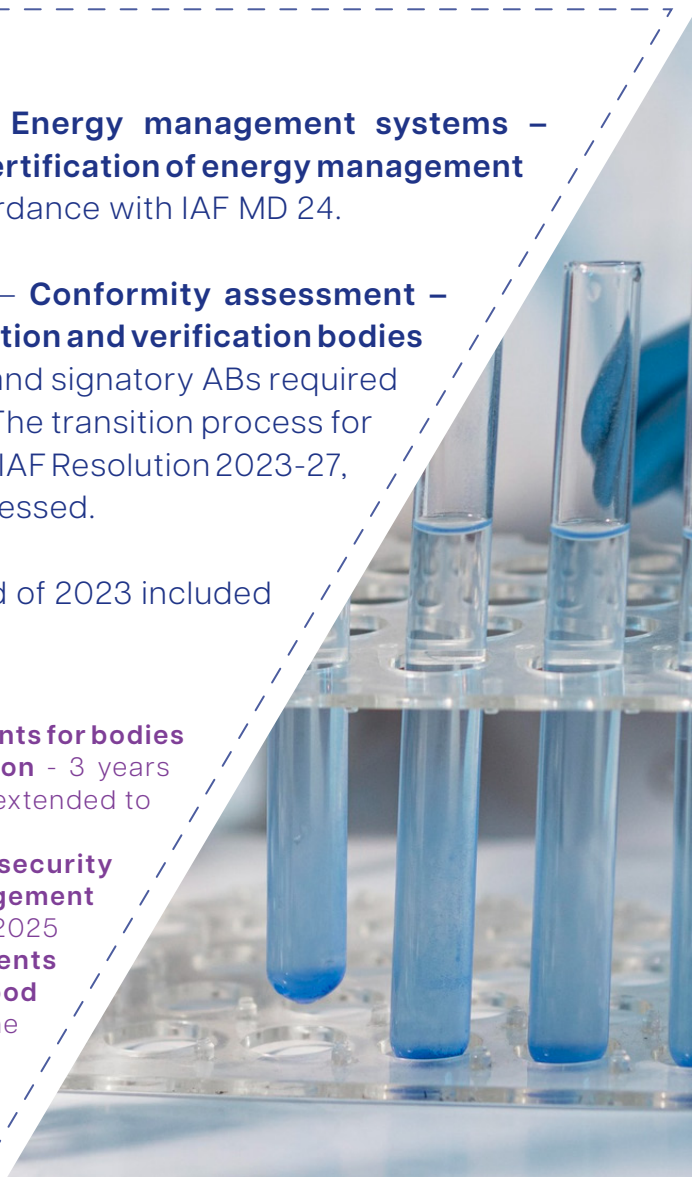
Signatories to the IAF MLA

The IAF MLA has been structured to build on existing and developing regional MLAs/MRAs established around the world. Therefore, IAF has formally recognised the MLA/MRA programs of six RAGs:

AFRAC

APAC

ARAC

EA

IAAC

SADCA

ABs recognised under these Regional MLAs/MRAs may apply to the IAF for recognition under the IAF MLA based on the acceptance of the mutual recognition arrangements established within these organisations.

Membership in the IAF MLA is facilitated by membership in the recognised RAGs' MLAs for recognised programs. IAF members who are also signatories of these regional MLAs/MRAs can be accepted into the IAF MLA for recognised programs.

Originally, unaffiliated ABs applied directly to IAF to become an IAF MLA signatory. Since the end of 2018, there are no unaffiliated IAF Member ABs as all IAF AB members are now also members of a RAG.

The number of signatories to the IAF MLA has grown in recent years, providing confidence to businesses and regulators in a greater number of economies. A full list of IAF MLA signatories is available in IAF MLA MC 17 and new IAF MLA signatories and scope extensions, as noted during the 2023 IAF General Assembly, are referenced in Annex 2 of this report. The graphs below show the evolution of the number of signatories at the regional level for different MLA scopes.

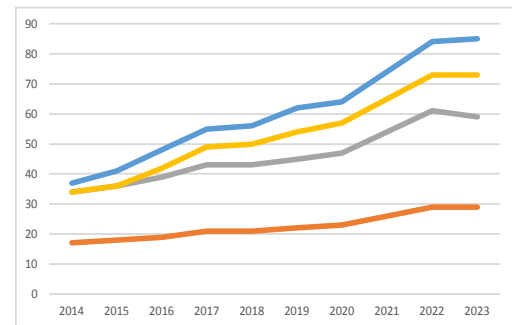**Number of signatories for Certification of Management Systems**

Number of signatories for Certification of Persons

Number of signatories for Certification of Products, Processes and Services
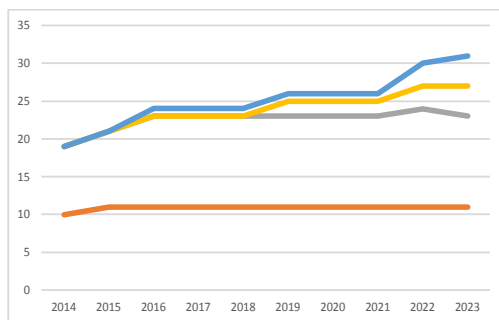
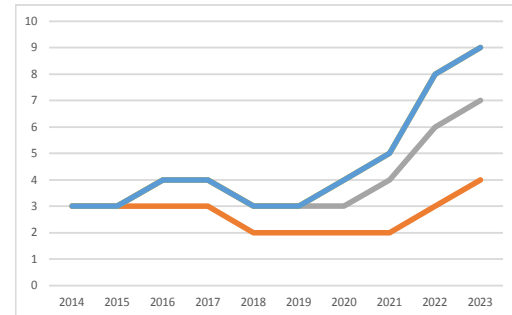**Number of signatories for GHG Validation/Verification**
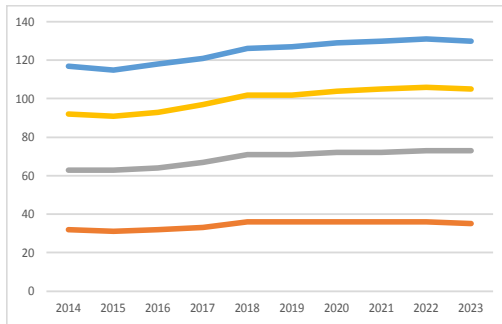
European co-operation for Accreditation
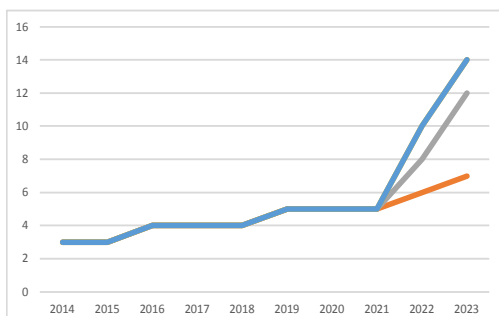

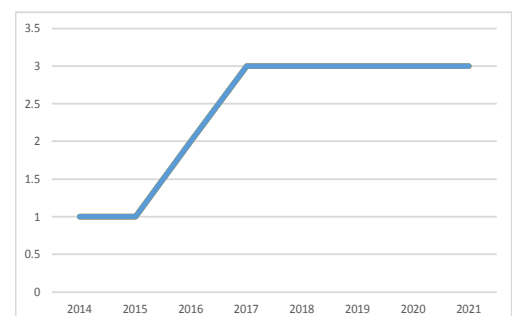**Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation**

Inter American Accreditation Cooperation
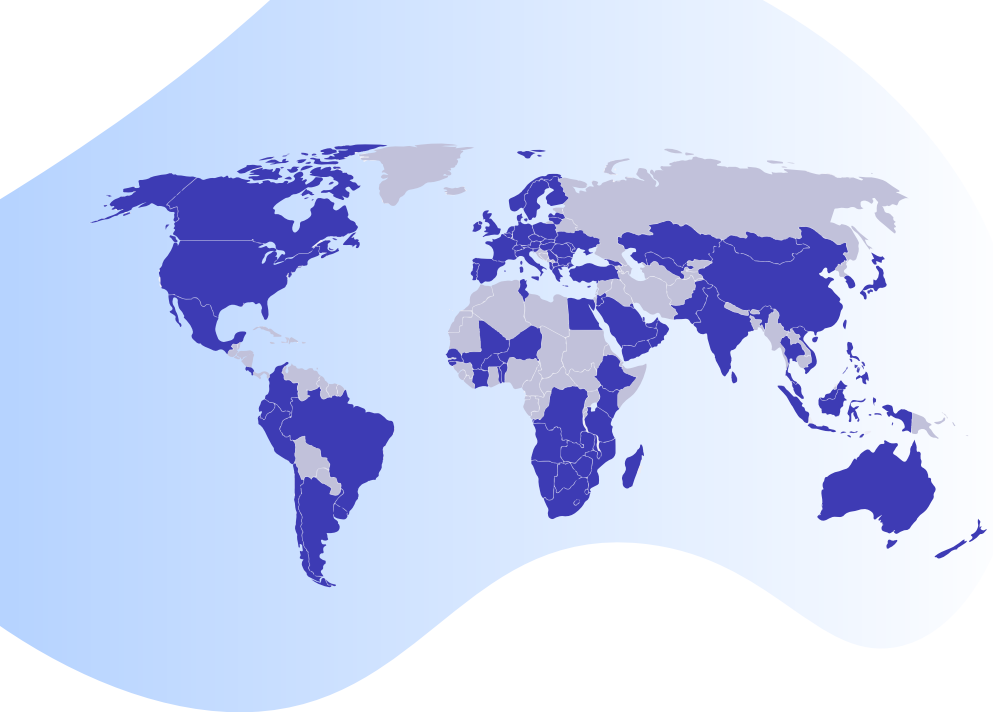

Arab Accreditation Cooperation

African Accreditation Cooperation

Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation

Not all signatories to Regional MLAs/MRAs have applied to become a signatory of the IAF MLA.

In 2023, the IAF MLA comprised **6** recognised RAGs and **85** ABs, representing a total of **101** economies.

Peer Evaluation Activities

ABs are admitted to the IAF MLA only after a stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team which is charged to ensure that the applicant complies fully with both the international standards and IAF requirements. IAF, and its AB members, invest significant cost and resources to ensure and maintain the integrity of the MLA through robust peer evaluations. The MLA and its signatories are under constant review. The peer evaluation process is ongoing and extensive, covering all economies in a regular programme.

The following peer evaluations of RAGs were conducted in 2023:

APAC re-evaluation

EA re-evaluation

IAAC scope extension to include person certification and GHG verification/validation

IAF MLA Improvement Activities

IAF is committed to monitoring and reviewing the MLA to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of stakeholders. In addition to consulting widely with stakeholders, IAF carries out several programmes and activities to continuously improve the value and effectiveness of the MLA.
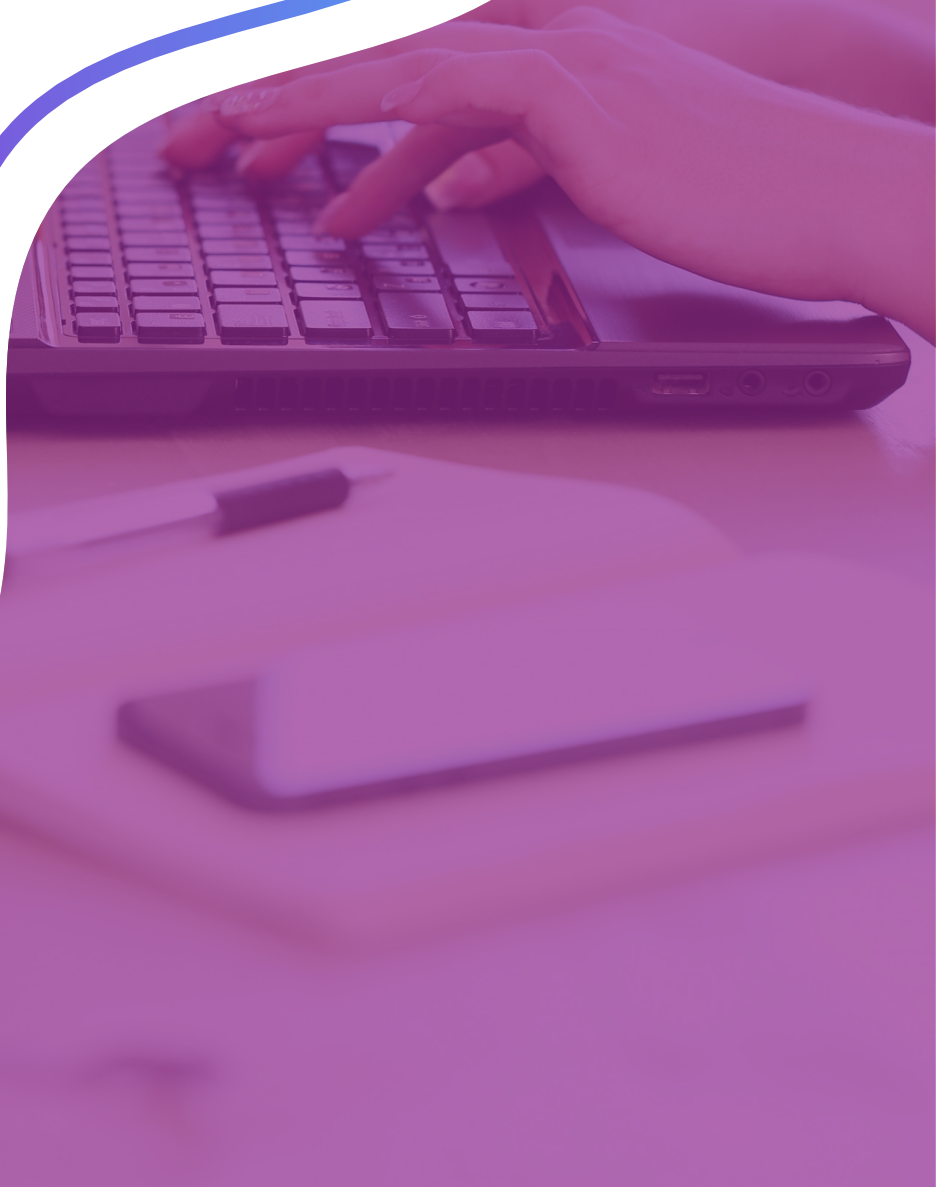
Feedback

Complaints provide a valuable mechanism for receiving feedback relating to the effectiveness of the MLA. This often confirms that the MLA is working effectively and that the process in place is suitably robust. It can also provide information that can be used to improve areas of the MLA. The following numbers of complaints were raised with IAF during this period:

◦ Complaints referred to ABs – six received and four remained open on 31 December 2023
◦ Complaints referred to RAGs – seven received and five remained open on 31 December 2023
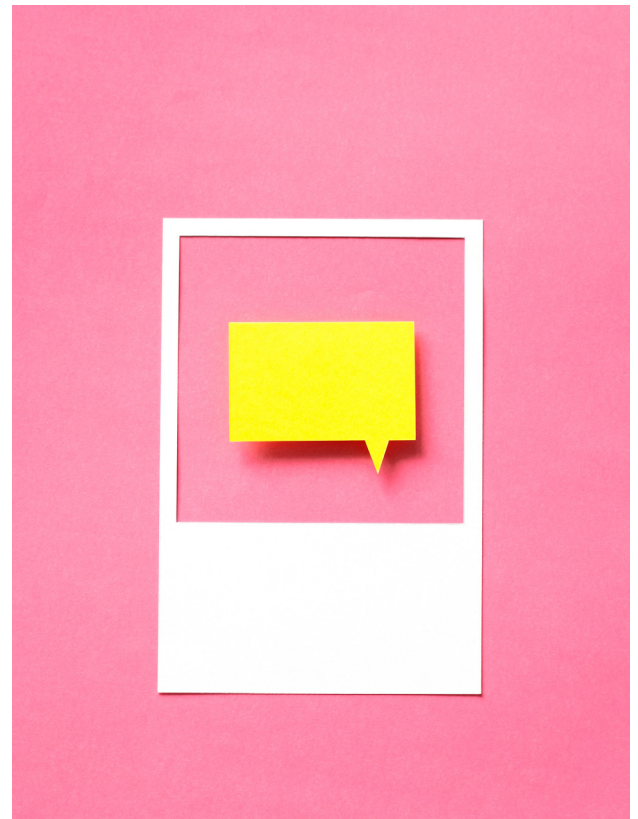
Post-COVID-19

Following the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic and the imposition of social distancing and travel restrictions, the IAF MLAC and IAF/ILAC JMC met remotely from 2020 to 2022. In November 2023, the first on-site meeting was held in Montréal, Canada after the travel restrictions were eliminated.

Improvement Activities

IAF consults widely with stakeholders in developing accreditation programs, and it works to deliver the best standard of conformity assessment to provide stakeholders with a value-added outcome.

In 2023, IAF continued to improve its collaboration with ILAC. Only IAF/ILAC JMC meetings are held and there are no separate meetings of IAF MLA MC and the ILAC AMC. This provides for a better understanding of the few different requirements and the many commonalities in the MLA area between the two organisations. The JMC manages all the peer evaluation activities and will contribute to the establishment of a single Arrangement for the Global Accreditation Cooperation, the new single international organization for accreditation being formed by IAF and ILAC.

In addition, the JMC initiated a revision of IAF/ILAC A1 – **IAF/ILAC Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Group,** with the intention to improve the evaluation methodology for RAGs.

IAF/ILAC A2 – **IAF/ILAC Multi-lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Arrangements): Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body** was already in the revision process, and a workshop was held in May 2023 to consider changes and explore a risk-based approach to evaluation. The outcome from this discussion will be taken into account in the revision.

The JMC also accepted a proposal for a training package to be developed to support those evaluators asked to undertake evaluations of Regional Accreditation Groups. This training package will be developed and delivered in 2024.

In addition to the work of the JMC, the IAF MLA Committee initiated three Task Force Groups (TFGs) to undertake the following activities:

· Further the past work of the Accreditation Body Information Exchange Group on accreditation body collaboration;
· Review IAF PL3 – **Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA**; and
· Review IAF ML4 – **Policies and Procedures for a MLA on the Level of Single Accreditation Bodies and on the Level of Regional Accreditation Groups.**
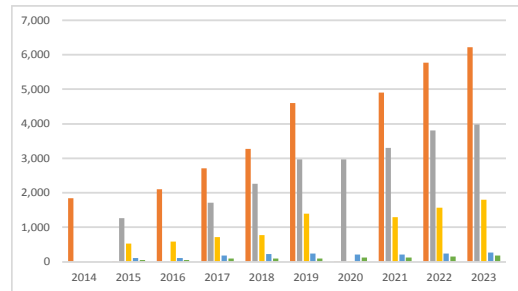
Global Growth

- ● Number of accredited CBs and VVBs
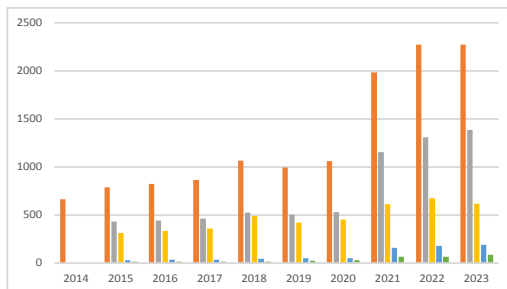- ● Number of Management System CBs
- ● Number of Product CBs
- ● Number of Person CBs
- ● Number of VVBs
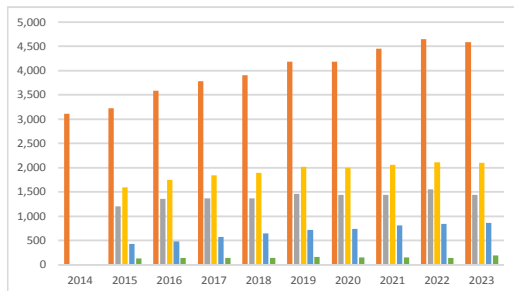
European co-operation for Accreditation

Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation

Inter American Accreditation Cooperation
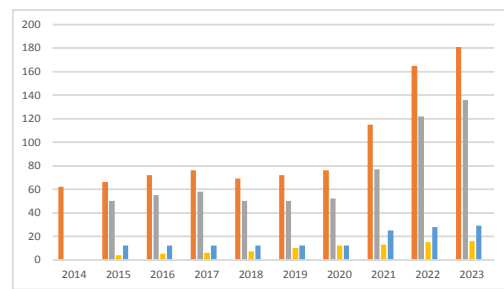
Arab Accreditation Cooperation
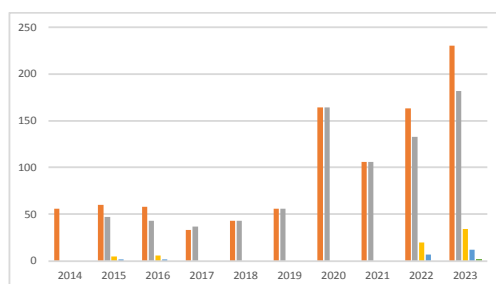
African Accreditation Cooperation
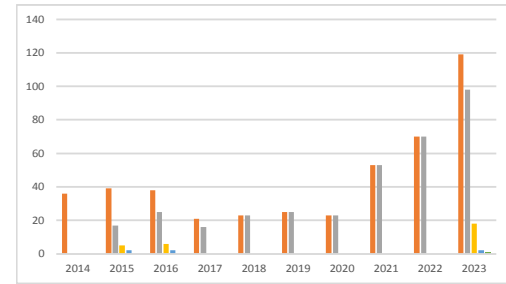
Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation

A total of **13,605 CBs and VVBs** are currently accredited, an increase of **4% since 2022**.

Note: These numbers reflect the total number of sub-scopes covered by accredited CABs in the RAGs, including where a CAB is accredited for more than one sub-scope.

Annex 1 – Scope of the MLA

The IAF MLA consisted of the following scopes at the end of 2023:

- Level 1: ISO/IEC 17011 (V2017, V2004)
- Level 2: Product Certification:
  - Level 3: ISO/IEC 17065:2012
  - Level 4:
    - GLOBALG.A.P. IFA General Regulations V4
    - GLOBALG.A.P. PHA General Regulations V1.0
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Food Safety Issue 8 (9), Part III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Agents and Brokers Issue 3, Part III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Packaging Materials Issue 6, Part III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Storage and Distribution Issue 4, Part III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Gluten Free Certification Program, Issue 3, Parts III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products Personal Care Household, Issue 4, Parts III & IV
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products General Merchandise, Issue 4, Parts III & IV
    - IFS Food Version 7 (8), Part 1, Part 3 Sections 2 & 3 and Part 4
  - Level 5:
    - GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria V4 (GG IFA)
    - GLOBALG.A.P. PHA CPCCs V1.0 (GG PHA)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Food Safety Issue 8 (9), Part II (BRCGS FS)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Agents and Brokers Issue 3, Part II (BRCGS AB)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Packaging Materials Issue 6, Part II (BRCGS PM)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Storage and Distribution Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS SD)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Gluten Free Certification Program, Issue 3, Part II (BRCGS GFCP)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products Personal Care Household, Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS CP PCH)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products General Merchandise, Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS CP GM)
    - IFS Food Version 7 (8), Part 2 (IFS Food)
  - Level 5:
    - GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria V4 (GG IFA)
    - GLOBALG.A.P. PHA CPCCs V1.0 (GG PHA)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Food Safety Issue 8 (9), Part II (BRCGS FS)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Agents and Brokers Issue 3, Part II (BRCGS AB)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Packaging Materials Issue 6, Part II (BRCGS PM)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Storage and Distribution Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS SD)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Gluten Free Certification Program, Issue 3, Part II (BRCGS GFCP)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products Personal Care Household, Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS CP PCH)
    - BRCGS Global Standard for Consumer Products General Merchandise, Issue 4, Part II (BRCGS CP GM)
    - IFS Food Version 7 (8), Part 2 (IFS Food) *****
- Level 2: Management Systems Certification:
  - Level 3: ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015
  - Level 4:
    - ISO/TS 22003:2013 (ISO 22003-1:2022)
    - ISO/IEC 17021-3:2017
    - ISO/IEC 17021-2:2016
    - ISO/IEC 27006:2015
    - ISO 50003:2014 (2021)
    - ISO/IEC TS 17021-10:2018
    - ISO/TS 22003:2013 FAMI QS Rules for Certification Bodies Version 8
    - ISO/TS 22003:2013 (ISO 22003-1:2022); FSSC 22000 V5.1 (V6) Scheme Part 3 – Requirements for the Certification Process; FSSC 22000 V5.1 (V6) Scheme Part 4 – Requirements for Certification Bodies
    - IAQG 9104-1:2022 Requirements for Aviation, Space, and Defense Quality Management System Certification Programs
  - Level 5:
    - ISO 22000: 2018 (FSMS)
    - ISO 9001:2015 (QMS)
    - ISO 14001:2015 (EMS)
    - ISO/IEC 27001:2013 (2022) (ISMS)
    - ISO 13485:2016 (MDMS)
    - ISO 50001:2018 (EnMS)
    - ISO 45001:2018 (OH&SMS)
    - FAMI-QS Certification Scheme Code, Version 6
    - FSSC 22000 V5.1 (V6) Scheme Part 2 – Requirements for organizations to be audited (FSSC 22000)
    - IAQG 9100:2016 Quality Management Systems – Requirements for Aviation, Space and Defense Organizations; IAQG 9110:2016 Quality Management Systems – Requirements for Aviation Maintenance Organizations; IAQG 9120:2016 Quality Management Systems – Requirements for Aviation, Space and Defense Distributors (IAQG)
- Level 2: Person Certification:
  - Level 3: ISO/IEC 17024: 2012
  - Level 4: IPC Management System Auditors Certification Scheme Issue 6
  - Level 5: IPC Management System Auditors Certification Scheme Issue 6, Section 4 (IPC)
- Level 2: Validation and Verification:
  - Level 3:
    - ISO 14065:2013
    - ISO/IEC 17029:2019
  - Level 4:
    - ICAO CORSIA ETM-Volume IV Version 1; ISO 14064-3:2006; ISO 14066:2011
    - ISO 14066:2011; ISO 14064-3:2019
    - ISO 14065:2020; ISO 14066:2011; ISO 14064-3:2019
  - Level 5:
    - ICAO CORSIA SARPs – Annex 16 Volume IV, Version 1
    - ISO 14064-1:2018; ISO 14064-2:2019 (GHG)

*Note: This scope adds requirements at Level 1 - IFS Food, Part 3, Section 1

Level 1 is the endorsed normative document for ABs.

Levels 2 and 3 are the main scopes, consisting of accreditation programs and endorsed normative documents.

Levels 4 and 5 are the sub-scopes consisting of applicable documents and endorsed normative documents.

Annex 2– New IAF MLA Signatories and Scope Extensions

IAF Resolution 2023-17 New Regional Accreditation Group IAF MLA Signatories

The General Assembly noted the admission to the IAF MLA, since the 2022 General Assembly, of the following IAF Regional Accreditation Group Member:
- **SADCA** – Main Scope: Management Systems Certification – ISO/IEC 17021-1; Sub-Scope: Level 4: ISO/IEC 17021-3; Sub-Scopes: Level 5: ISO 9001.

IAF Resolution 2023-19 – New AB IAF MLA Signatories

The General Assembly noted the admissions to the IAF MLA, since the 2022 General Assembly, of the following IAF Accreditation Body Members:
- **KOLAS** Republic of Korea (APAC) – Main Scope: Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065; Sub-Scope: Level 4: GLOBALG.A.P. IFA General Regulations; Sub-Scope: Level 5: GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria
- **JAS-AU** Jordan (ARAC) – Main Scope: Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065
- **JASaff** Japan (APAC) – Main Scope: Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065

IAF Resolution 2023-20 – AB IAF MLA Scope Extensions

The General Assembly noted the MLA scope extensions, since the 2022 General Assembly, of the following IAF Accreditation Body Members:
- **EGAC** Egypt (AFRAC) – Main Scope: Certification of Persons – ISO/IEC 17024
- **EGAC** Egypt (AFRAC); **TUNAC** Tunisia (EA) – Main Scope: Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065
- **OAA** Argentina, **OUA** Uruguay, **SAE** Ecuador, **SCC** Canada (IAAC) – Sub-Scope: Level 4: ISO/TS 22003, FSSC 22000 Scheme Parts 3 and 4; Sub-Scope: Level 5: FSSC 22000 Scheme Part 2
- **BoA** Vietnam (APAC) – Sub-Scope: Level 4: ISO/IEC TS 17021-10; Sub-Scope: Level 5: ISO 45001
- **ECA** Costa Rica (IAAC) – Sub-Scope: Level 4: ISO/IEC TS 17021-10, ISO 50003; Sub-Scope: Level 5: ISO 45001, ISO 50001
- **EGAC** Egypt, **SANAS** South Africa (AFRAC) – Sub-Scope: Level 5: ISO 13485
- **AA** Austria, **ACCREDIA** Italy, **BELAC** Belgium, **COFRAC** France, **DAkkS** Germany, **DANAK** Denmark, **ENAC** Spain, **PCA** Poland, **RvA** Netherlands, **SAS** Switzerland, **UKAS** United Kingdom (EA) – Sub-Scope: Level 4: IFS Food Version 7 (8), Part 1, Part 3 Sections 2 &3 and Part 4; Sub-Scope: Level 5: IFS Food Version 7 (8), Part 2 (IFS Food)

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