



Certified Once
Accepted Everywhere

IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) Annual Report



2015

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Introduction

The IAF and its accreditation body members invest significant effort and resource to maintain the integrity and consistency of the MLA through a peer evaluation process. This report sets out the detailed activity that is carried out as part of the peer evaluation process, to ensure that regulators, specifiers, and businesses can have confidence in the Arrangement.

The IAF MLA

The purpose of the IAF MLA is to provide users, in countries with accreditation bodies that are IAF MLA signatories, assurance that equivalent certification and verification bodies in other countries operate to the same standard as those in their own country.

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

Certificates in the fields of management systems, products (including services and processes), personnel, verification and other similar programmes of conformity assessment issued by bodies accredited by IAF MLA signatories are therefore relied upon in international trade.

The MLA contributes to the freedom of world trade by eliminating technical barriers. IAF works to find the most effective way of achieving a single system to meet the objective:

“Certified once, accepted everywhere”

The IAF MLA Mark

The IAF MLA Mark can be used by accreditation bodies to demonstrate their status as a signatory to the IAF MLA. If approved by the Accreditation Body, accredited certification bodies can also use the Mark in combination with the accreditation symbol to use on their certificates, providing the certificates are issued in association with an IAF endorsed scheme.



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

Scope of the IAF MLA

The IAF MLA currently is comprised of accreditation for the following scopes:

1) Main Scope: Certification Bodies of Management Systems:

Sub Scopes:

- a. ISO 9001 – Quality management systems – Requirements
- b. ISO 14001 – Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use
- c. ISO 13485:2012 Medical Devices – Quality management systems – Requirements for regulatory purposes
- d. ISO/TS 22003:2007 – Food Safety Systems – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems and ISO 22000 – Food safety management systems – Requirements for any organization in the food chain
- e. ISO/IEC 27006:2011 – Information technology – Security techniques – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of information security management systems and ISO 27001 Information technology – Security techniques – Information security management systems – Requirements

2) Main Scope: Certification Bodies for Products processes and services

Sub Scope:

GlobalG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance General Requirements and GLOBALG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria

3) Main Scope: Certification Bodies for Persons

Sub Scope: none

4) Main scope: GHG validation and verification bodies

Sub Scope: none

Certificates based on a main scope are 'equally reliable' because the conformity assessment bodies conform to the same standard.

Certificates based on a sub-scope are considered 'equivalent' if they are based on the same IAF endorsed standard.

New Scope Extensions

In 2015 the IAF continued working with Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) to recognise the GFSI benchmarking process to facilitate the acceptance of GFSI benchmarked schemes as sub-scopes under the IAF MLA.

Signatories to the IAF MLA

The IAF MLA has been structured to build on existing and developing regional MLAs established around the world. Therefore, IAF has granted Special Recognition to the MLA programs of three Regional Accreditation Groups, the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and the InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), on the basis of the acceptance of the mutual recognition arrangements established within these organisations.

Membership of the IAF MLA is recognised as being satisfied by membership of either the EA MLA, the PAC MLA or the IAAC MLA for recognised programs. IAF members who are also signatories of these regional MLAs are automatically accepted into the IAF MLA for recognised programs.

Another three Regional Accreditation Groups have been working on establishing their MLAs and two have made formal application to the IAF for Special Recognition of their MLA programs. In recognition of this, ARAB Accreditation Cooperation, (ARAC), African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) and Southern African Development Community in Accreditation (SADCA) have been included in this report.

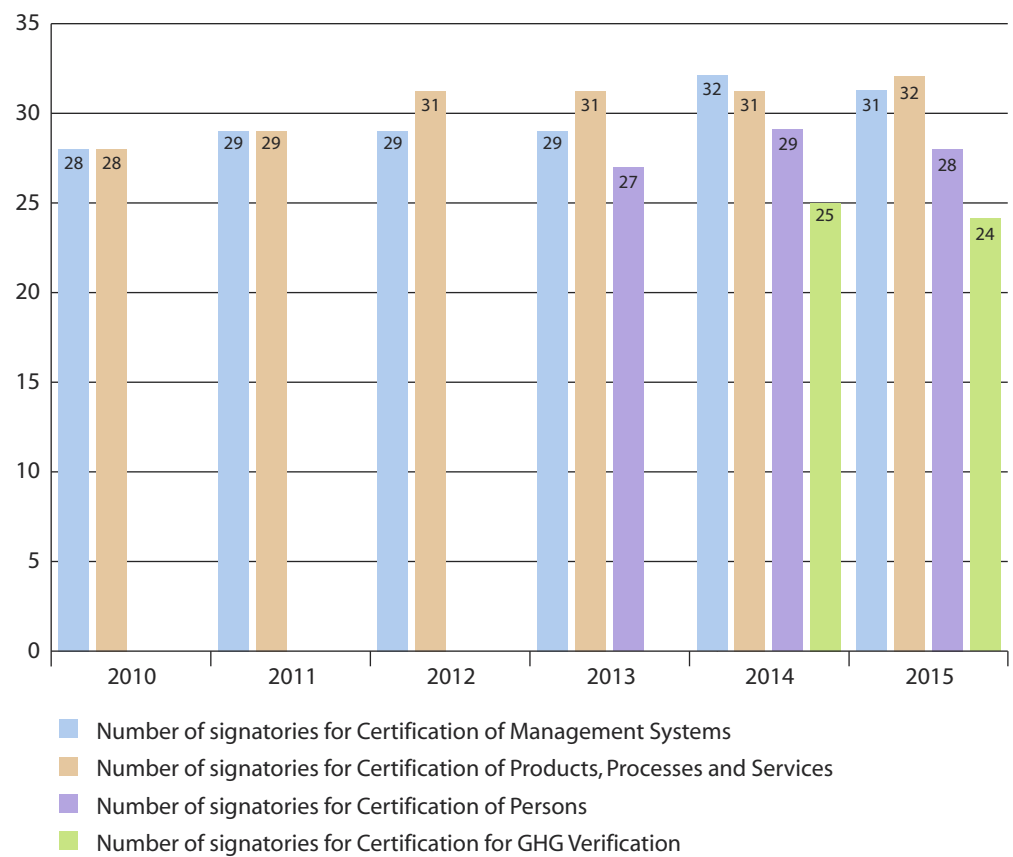
There are a small number of IAF Member accreditation bodies that are not a member of a Regional Accreditation Group referred to as "unaffiliated" accreditation bodies. Unaffiliated accreditation bodies can apply directly to IAF to become an IAF MLA signatory.

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.

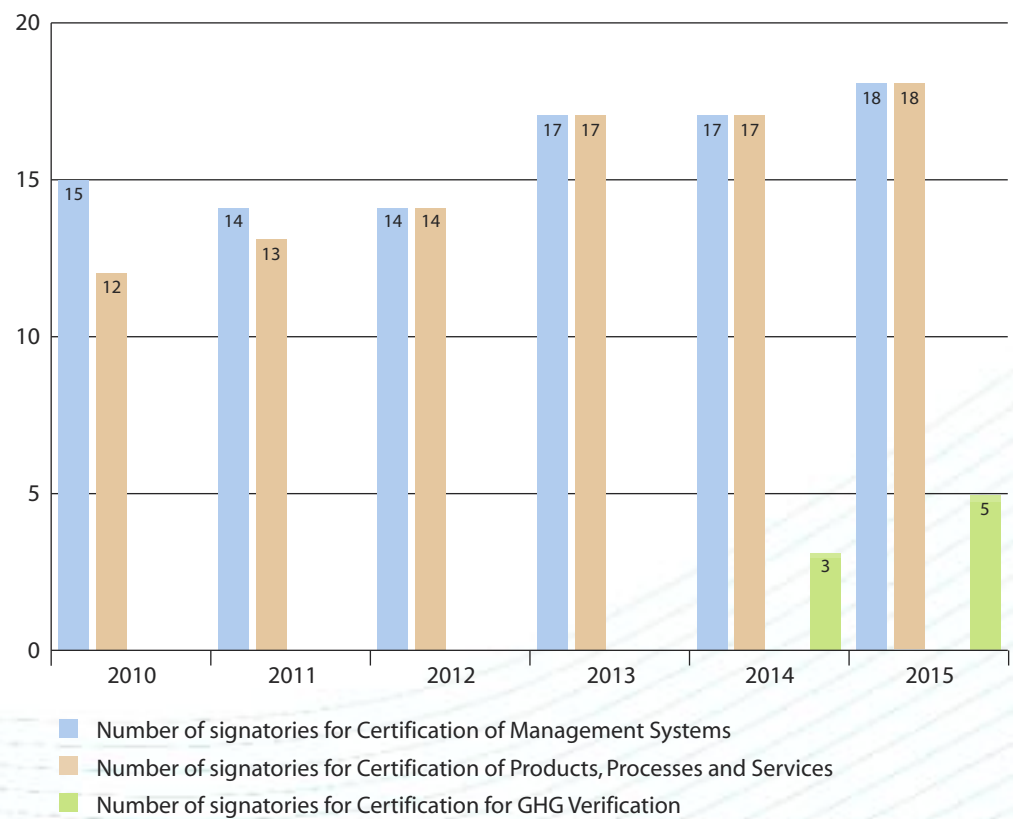


Signatories to the IAF MLA

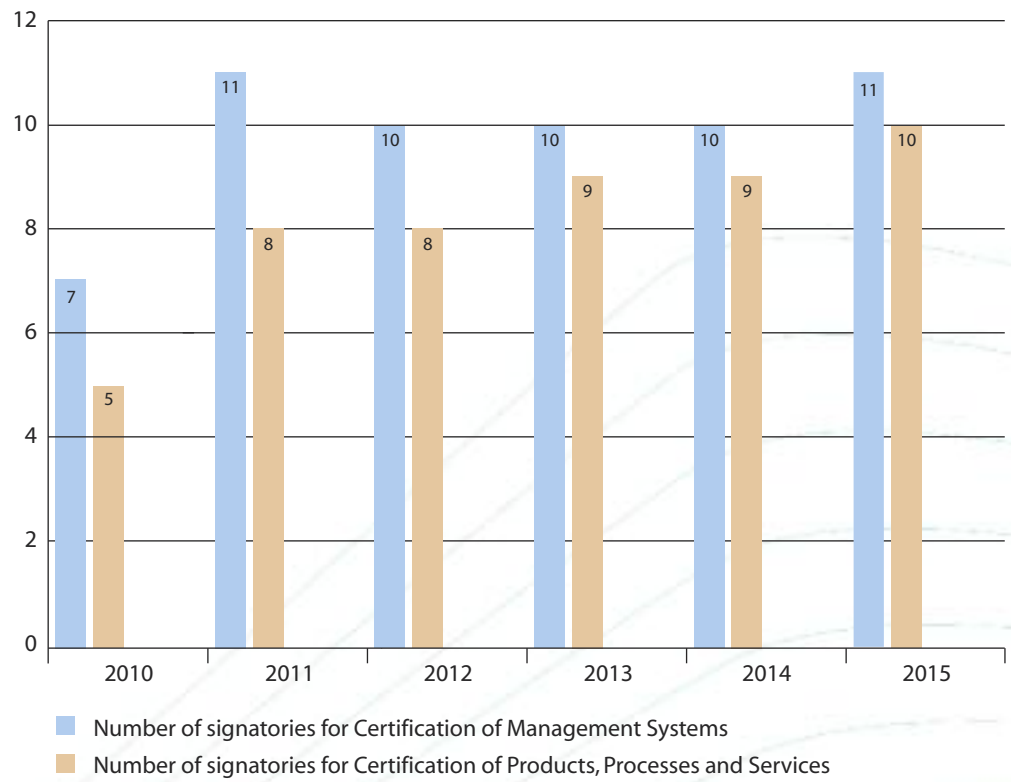
EA



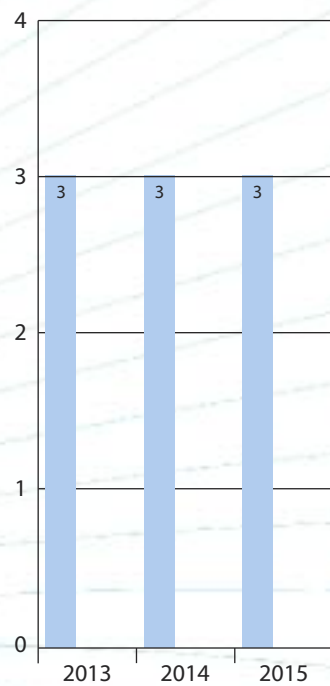
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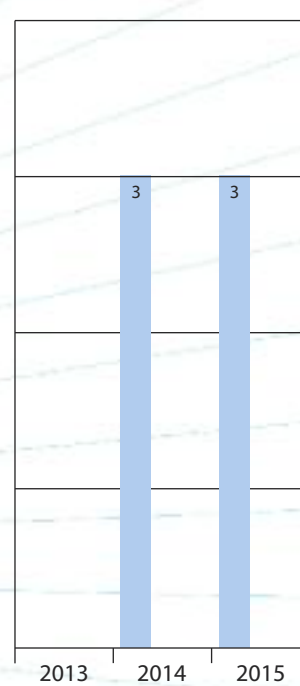
IAAC



ARAC



AFRAC



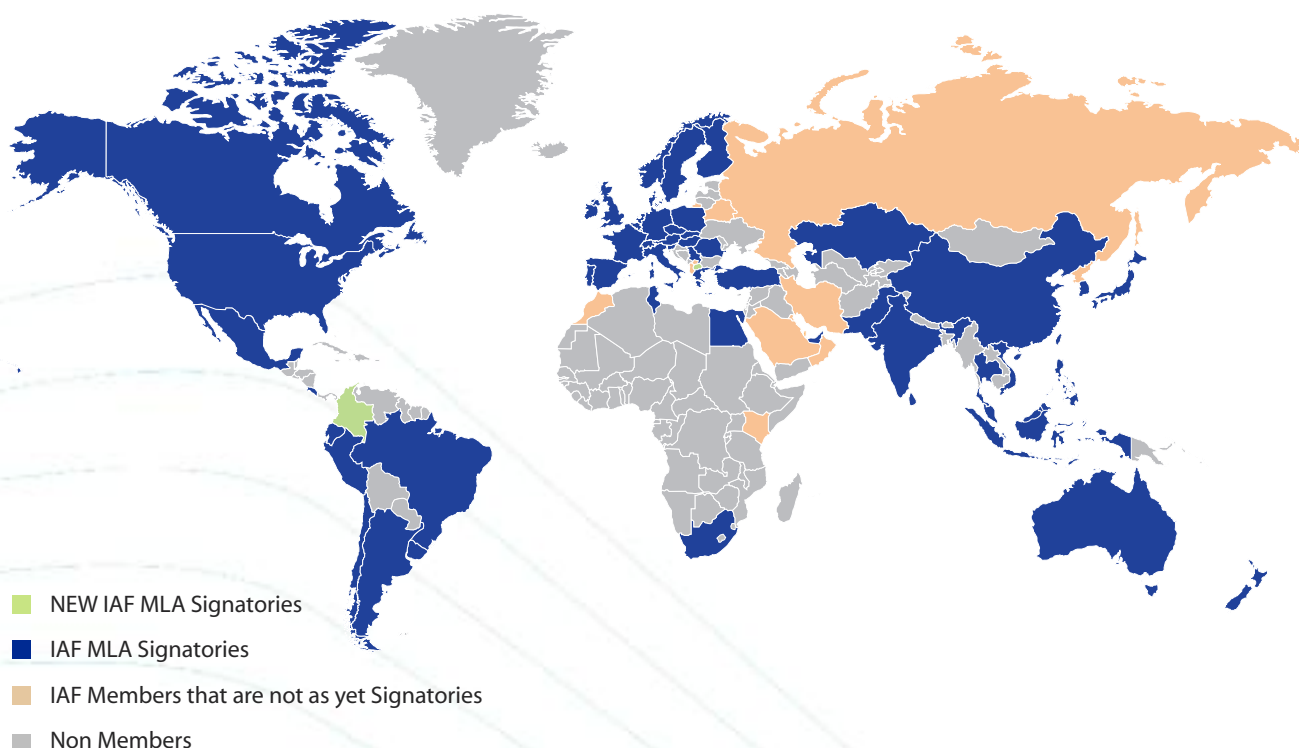
SADCA



■ Number of signatories for Certification of Management Systems

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

In 2015 the IAF MLA comprised 3 Recognised Regional Accreditation Groups and 62 accreditation bodies in total representing 57 economies. Two of the 62 signatories are unaffiliated accreditation bodies



New Applicants

Further growth in the number of signatories is expected in the future as 3 applications (1 region 2 Accreditation bodies) were received in 2015.

EA: In 2014, two applications were received from BSCA, Belarus and GAC, Georgia, to join the EA MLA for all scopes through a bilateral agreement with EA. GAC has been pre-evaluated in 2015, and peer-evaluation will follow in 2016. Pre-evaluation of BSCA was performed in the beginning of 2016.

The application of MOLDAC, Moldavia, was received in 2015 to join the MLA for all scopes through a bilateral agreement. MOLDAC peer evaluation is planned for 2016.

The peer-evaluation of NAT, Hungary, was cancelled by decision of the MLA Council (MAC), based on the information notified to EA in summer 2015 according to which NAT activities would stop on 31st December 2015.

PAC: 7 applications for the extension of Management Systems MLA, 2 applications for Product, 2 applications for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) and 4 applications for Persons MLA.

IAAC: 8 applications – for Persons (1), Product (1), Medical Devices Management System (MDMS) (2), Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) (2), Information Security Management System (1) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) (1).

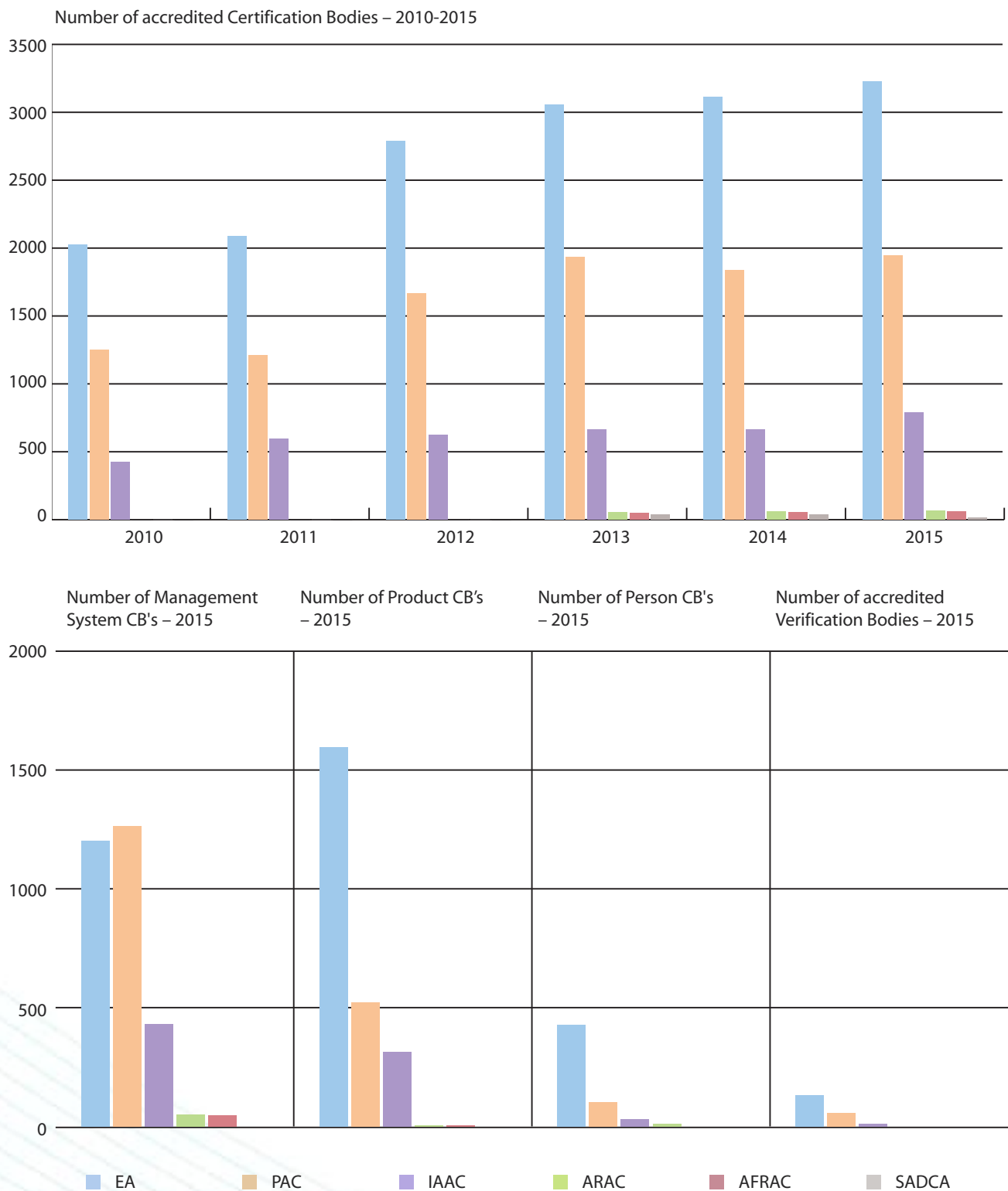
ARAC: Two for Management System Certification (Quality Management System (QMS), Environmental Management System (EMS) and Food Safety Management System (FSMS) as sub-scope). The Product is on-going (Peer evaluation conducted in November 2015).

AFRAC: 1 application for Management Systems Certification (Quality Management System (QMS).

SADCA: 1 application for Management Systems Certification (Quality Management System (QMS).

Global Growth

In addition to the growth in signatories to the IAF MLA, there has been a corresponding growth in the number of accredited certification bodies.



A total of 6128 certification bodies are currently accredited, an increase of 68% since 2010. Whilst growth has taken place in all regions, it is most pronounced in PAC and IAAC.

Note: These numbers reflect the total number of sub-scopes covered by accredited certification bodies in the Regional Groups, including where a certification body is accredited for more than one sub-scope.

Peer Evaluation Process

Accreditation bodies are admitted to the IAF MLA only after a most stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team which is charged to ensure that the applicant member complies fully with both the international standards and IAF requirements.

IAF, and its accreditation body members, invest significant cost and resource to ensure they maintain the integrity of the MLA through robust peer evaluation. The MLA and its signatories are under constant review. The peer evaluation process is ongoing and extensive, covering all economies on a regular programme.

The following table provides an overview of the evaluations conducted in 2015:

	IAF	EA	PAC	IAAC	ARAC	AFRAC	SADCA
Reviewed reports	2 Regional Bodies Group 1 Accreditation Body	10 Accreditation Bodies: <i>8 regular PEs + 2 pre-evaluation</i>	9 Accreditation Bodies	6 Accreditation Bodies	1 Accreditation Body	4 Accreditation Bodies	2 Accreditation Bodies
Extraordinary evaluations	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Man-days of evaluation effort	–	583	96	370 <i>Evaluation teams: 22 persons x 15 days = 330 days MLA Group: 20 persons x 2 days = 40 days</i>	–	95	95

In addition, the following numbers of peer evaluations are in progress or planned for 2016.

IAF: 2 Regional Groups and 2 unaffiliated accreditation bodies

EA: 13 accreditation bodies (full scope) + 7 for scope extension (PTP field)

PAC: 16 accreditation bodies (full IAF scope or scope extension)

IAAC: 6 accreditation bodies (full IAF scope or scope extension)

- 2 re-evaluations for QMS, EMS and Product
- 2 scope extensions for MDMS
- 1 scope extension for Persons
- 1 scope extension for GHG

ARAC: 2 accreditation bodies (full IAF scope)

AFRAC: 2 accreditation bodies (full IAF scope x 2 QMS; x 1 EMS)

SADCA: 1 accreditation body (full IAF scope QMS)

Expanding the scope of the IAF MLA

The IAF MLA is under constant review to better serve the needs of stakeholders. At the global level, the IAF continues to liaise with the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) to recognise the GFSI benchmarking process to facilitate the acceptance of GFSI benchmarked schemes as sub-scopes under the IAF MLA.

The Regions are also extending their scopes to broaden the reach and value of the IAF MLA.

Regional developments that took place in 2015 include:

Region	Development
EA	<p>No extension of the IAF MLA scope within EA in 2015.</p> <p>EA applied to IAF in 2013 to extend the scope of EA to the main scope 'certification of persons', stated in the following EA GA resolution:</p> <p><i>EA Resolution 2013 (32) 02</i></p> <p><i>The General Assembly agrees that EA applies to IAF to extend the scope of EA as a recognized region to the new main scope "certification of persons" based on ISO/IEC 17024, and asks for the inclusion of the necessary peer evaluation in the forthcoming peer evaluation of EA by IAF/ILAC.</i></p> <p>The evaluation of EA was performed in 2014 and the evaluation report will be discussed at the MLA MC Meeting in Frankfurt.</p>
PAC	Extending the GFSI MLA.
IAAC	<p>Currently operates the following MLA scopes (QMS, EMS, FSMS, ISMS, MDMS, Product (including GLOBAL G.A.P. IFA sub-scope), Persons, and GHG).</p> <p>In 2015, IAAC began operation of the IAF MLA Scope Extension for Level 4: Global G.A.P. General Regulations and Level 5: Product, Global G.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria.</p>
ARAC	Extending the MLA to the Product Certification.
AFRAC	No extension of scopes.
SADCA	No extension of scopes.

MLA monitoring and 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 a number of 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 during this period:

- **IAF:** No complaints or appeals received
- **EA:** No complaints or appeals received
 - At the end of 2014, 2 complaints were under process. 1 out of those 2 remained open in 2015. A TFG was appointed to deal with the case. The other complaint was eventually closed.
 - A complaint has been on hold since 2014. It will be reconsidered when legal proceedings at the national level have come to a conclusion.
 - A new case was received but found to not substantiate a complaint according to the EA procedure.
 - An appeal was lodged with EA against a MAC decision.
- **PAC:** 1 complaint and no appeals received
- **IAAC:** 2 complaints regarding IAAC MLA signatory members were received in 2015. No appeals were received.
- **ARAC:** No complaints or appeals received
- **AFRAC:** No complaints or appeals received
- **SADCA:** No complaints or appeals received

Continuous improvement

IAF consults widely with stakeholders in developing accreditation programs, and it works to deliver the best standard of conformity assessment in order to provide stakeholders with a value added outcome. The following activities were carried out to improve the MLA:

IAF:

Development / revision of IAF MLA Documents in order to achieve a greater harmonisation:

IAF MLA MC 27 – Development of an IAF MLA Sub-scope extension checklist for Regions
Regional Body

IAF ML 4:2015 Policies and Procedures for a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) on the Level of Single Accreditation Bodies and on the Level of Regional Groups

EA:

The General Assembly adopted the following IAF mandatory documents as EA mandatory documents in 2015:

- IAF MD5:2015 – Determination of Audit Time of Quality and Environmental Management Systems
- IAF MD 8:2015 – Application of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 in the Field of Medical Device Quality Management Systems (ISO 13485)
- IAF MD 9:2015 – Application of ISO/IEC 17021 in the Field of Medical Device Quality Management Systems (ISO 13485)
- IAF MD 13:2014 version 2 – Knowledge Requirements for Accreditation Body Personnel for Information Security Management Systems (ISO/IEC 27001)
- IAF MD 16:2014 version 2 – Application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) Certification Bodies
- IAF MD 17:2015 version 2 – Witnessing Activities for the Accreditation of Management Systems Certification Bodies
- IAF MD 18:2015 version 2 – Application of ISO/IEC 17021:2011 in the Service Management Sector (ISO/IEC 20000-1)

In order to get a comprehensive and updated picture of the available Evaluator resources of the MAC, an online survey was conducted at the end of 2015. The template for the online survey was changed to allow collecting more detailed information on the evaluators' competence for main fields and also for sub-fields. This is meant to improve monitoring of the EA resources and enhance the overall competence of EA evaluation teams.

The sampling and witnessing processes take into account the sub scopes to improve the coverage and efficiency of the peer evaluation process.

A new policy for the planning of MAC training activities was established. This policy aims at ensuring regular and systematic refresher training for team members and team leaders, and giving an enhanced focus on the horizontal issues of peer evaluation such as evaluation techniques, risks, documentation and statistical information.

EA developed a closer cooperation with IAF.

PAC:

Revision of Constitution of the PAC, Structure of PAC, Requirements of Membership

Revision of Policies and Procedures for an MLA Among Accreditation Bodies

Revision of PAC Procedure for Nomination of Potential Team Members

IAAC:

IAAC PR 004 "Procedure for Selection, Training, Qualification and Monitoring the Performance of IAAC Peer Evaluators", updated to ensure alignment with the IAF-ILAC A2 document.

IAAC PR 005 "Procedure for Handling Appeals and Complaints", changed to include Accreditation Body appeals of findings or adverse decisions, by an evaluation team during the evaluation process.

IAAC is developing a draft procedure for joint peer evaluations with PAC.

ARAC:

1. ARAC Peer evaluators' workshop

The 2nd ARAC MLA workshop held on 8th February 2016, Tunis, Tunisia, for the ARAC MLA Committee members and Peer evaluators which focused especially on the following:

- Information and discussion about the changes in the procedures for IAF/ILAC evaluation in IAF/ILAC A1 and A2,
- Information about the results from the IAF/ILAC Joint Working Group A-series meetings,
- Capacity building of the ARAC Peer evaluators and MLA Committee members for the preparation of upcoming IAF & ILAC Peer evaluation,
- Information and discussion of the implementation of these changes at the ARAC Peer evaluations,
- Information and discussion about the new and updated ARAC Peer evaluation process documentations and requirements,
- Information and discussion about the use of the new applicable ARAC forms during the Peer evaluations,
- Lessons learned from the conducted ARAC Peer evaluations.

2. Improvement of the ARAC MLA process:

Within the framework of improving the ARAC MLA procedures, the following ARAC MLA documents have been prepared and updated by the ARAC MLA and approved by the ARAC Executive Committee and General Assembly members:

- ARAC MLA Committee and MLA Group TOR,
- ARAC MD 002: ARAC-MD-002-Policies & Procedures for MLA,
- ARAC MD 003 IAF and ILAC Resolutions applicable to ARAC MLA Peer evaluations,
- ARAC Form FM 023: ARAC Evaluation Report Template,
- ARAC Form FM 003: ARAC Checklist for Peer Evaluation,
- ARAC Form FM 001: ARAC MLA application form.

AFRAC:

Revision and development of AFRAC MRA documentation in order to address implementation challenges and ensure that they are aligned to IAF and ILAC requirements.

SADCA:

Revision and development of SADCA MRA documentation in order to address implementation challenges and ensure that they are aligned to IAF and ILAC requirements.

Training

A number of training sessions, seminars and workshops took place during the period to extend the knowledge base, share best practice, and to maintain the competence of peer evaluators and assessment personnel.

IAF:

- ISO 14971:2007 – Medical Devices Risk Management
- ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management Systems
- ISO 14001:2015 – Environmental Management Systems
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements

EA:

Technical Committees Training Sessions:

- A training workshop on ISO/IEC 17024:2012 was held in March 2015 in Milan, Italy; 31 participants attended
- A training workshop on ISO 50003:2014 was held in April 2015 in Riga, Latvia; 28 participants attended
- A training workshop on ISO/TS 22003:2013 was held in June 2015 in Zaandam, the Netherlands; 31 participants attended

MAC Trainings:

- A training workshop for newcomer/potential evaluators was held in June 2015 in Paris, France; 25 participants attended
- A refresher training on ISO/IEC 17025 & ISO 15189 for team members was held in November 2015 in Brussels, Belgium; 20 participants attended
- A refresher training seminar for Team Leaders was held in December 2015 in Brussels, Belgium; 15 participants attended.

PAC:

- ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management Systems
- ISO 14001:2015 – Environmental Management Systems
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements

IAAC:

- ISO/IEC 17011:2004 – 2 Peer evaluator training workshops were held in 2015.
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 – Peer evaluator exercises on classification of findings harmonization in peer evaluations for the scope of Product Certification Bodies.

ARAC:

- ARAC Peer evaluators' workshops planned for 2016

AFRAC:

- 1-3 October 2015 Peer Evaluator Training of 15 trainees
- 8 October 2015 Workshop on: ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 – Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements

SADCA:

- No training or workshops

Public Sector Assurance

Case studies from economies all around the world continue to be added to the publicsectorassurance.org website that was launched in 2014 to illustrate the value of accreditation in key policy areas as a tool to help government officials and regulators deliver results.

The site, which has been put together by [IAF](#), [ILAC](#), [ISO](#), [IIOC](#) and [IEC](#), also contains links to independent research and supporting information to provide additional supporting evidence.

By showcasing the policy areas where accreditation of conformity assessment is, and can be used, such as [economic development](#), [healthcare](#), [environmental protection](#), [energy](#), [food safety](#), [construction](#), [crime and security](#), the site continues to provide inspiration for central government, local government and regulators to deliver positive benefit by the use of more conformity assessment tools.

Supporting the needs of government, regulators and the public sector remains a core objective of the conformity assessment community.

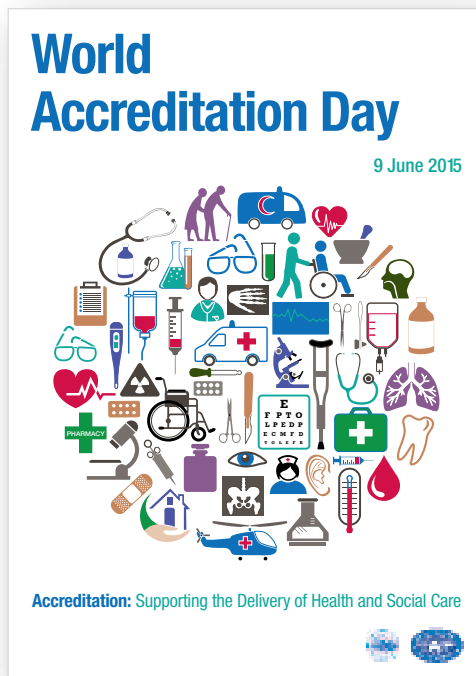


World Accreditation Day 2015

The global accreditation community celebrates each year with the World Accreditation Day on 9 June to raise awareness of the value that accreditation plays in facilitating global trade or in checking that products are fit and safe for consumption against a standard, a code or practice or regulatory requirements.

The theme for World Accreditation Day in 2015 was “Accreditation: Supporting the Delivery of Health and Social Care”.

Accreditation provides a key tool for health and social care providers in this delivery as the successful provision of health and social care is one of the greatest challenges today and will only grow in its magnitude and complexity. The need to provide reassuring, consistent, cost-effective health and social care grows every day and accreditation supports these outcomes.



Annex 1: New IAF MLA Signatories, New Regional MLA Scope Extensions and New AB MLA Scope Extensions

To refer to the full list of signatories and scopes please visit the IAF website

New IAF MLA Signatories:

IARM: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Main Scope:

Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065 (EA)

ONAC: Colombia

Main Scopes:

Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065, Management System Certification – ISO/IEC 17021;

Sub-Scopes:

Level 5: ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 (IAAC)

New regional MLA Scope Extensions:

PAC: Pacific

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: ISO/TS 22003, ISO/IEC 27006 and GlobalG.A.P General Regulations;

Level 5: ISO 22000, ISO/IE 27001 and Product, GlobalG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria.

IAAC: Americas

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: GlobalG.A.P. General Regulations;

Level 5: Product, GlobalG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria.

EA: Europe

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: GlobalG.A.P. General Regulations;

Level 5: Product, GlobalG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria.

New AB MLA Scope Extensions:

IAS: USA

Main Scope:

Management System Certification – ISO/IEC 17021;

Sub-Scopes:

Level 5: ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 (PAC)

Annex 1: New IAF MLA Signatories, New Regional MLA Scope Extensions and New AB MLA Scope Extensions *continued*

OUA: Uruguay

Main Scope:

Product Certification – ISO/IEC 17065 (IAAC);

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: GlobalG.A.P. General Regulations;

Level 5: Product, GlobalG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria

BoA: Vietnam

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: GlobalG.A.P. General Regulations;

Level 5: Product, GlobalG.A.P. IFA Control Points and Compliance Criteria (PAC)

BoA: Vietnam, **CNAS:** China, **EMA:** Mexico, **JAB:** Japan, **JAS-ANZ:** Australia & New Zealand, **KAB:** Korea, **KAN:** Indonesia, **NABCB:** India, **SAC:** Singapore, **SLAB:** Sri Lanka, **TAF:** Chinese Taipei

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: ISO/TS 2203

Level 5: ISO 22000 (PAC)

JAB: Japan, **NABCB** India, **TAF:** Chinese Taipei

Sub-Scopes:

Level 4: ISO/IEC 27006

Level 5: ISO/IEC 27001 (PAC)

IAF MoU membership changes:

Admission to the IAF MoU of the following members (in order of the date of membership approval):

National Accreditation Association of DPR Korea (NAA)

Belarusian State Centre for Accreditation (BSCA)

Institute for Accreditation of the Republic of Macedonia (IARM)

Moroccan Accreditation Service (SEMAC)





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