

GLOBAL ACCREDITATION
COOPERATION INCORPORATED
LOGO

MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT: STRUCTURE, SCOPE AND OBLIGATIONS

Issue Date: 23 October 2025
Implementation Date: 01 January 2026
Version No: 1.0

FURTHER INFORMATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION..... 4

2. DEFINITIONS 4

3. WHAT THE GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA
DELIVERS..... 5

4. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – STRUCTURE..... 5

5. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – SCOPE 7

6. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES 7

7. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – OBLIGATIONS 8

8. AMENDMENT TABLE 11

ANNEX 1 - GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA SIGNATURE
SHEET..... 12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **Purpose:** This document outlines the scope and obligations of signatories to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Arrangement (MRA) and serves as its policy statement.
- 1.2 **Scope:** This document applies to the governance framework of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, and it defines the applicability of policies to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Signatories, which include Full Members and Regional Cooperation Bodies (RCBs) that have met the established requirements under Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated's Constitution and Bylaws.
- 1.3 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA operates based on evaluations carried out in accordance with applicable international standards, rules, policies, and procedures, including those outlined in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-recognised/endorsed normative documents. These evaluations ensure that accreditation bodies consistently implement accreditation requirements across all recognised fields.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Accreditation Body (AB)** - an authoritative body that provides accreditation (*Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001: Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Constitution*).
- 2.2 **Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Arrangement (Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA)** - the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on the operation of accreditation that is signed by Full Members (*Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-GOV-001: Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Constitution*).
- 2.3 **Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)** - a body that performs Conformity Assessment Activities and that can be the object of accreditation (*ISO/IEC 17011:2017 clause 3.4*).
- 2.4 **Full Member** - an Accreditation Body that has been accepted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated as a signatory of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Arrangement and meets the requirements and obligations for Associate Members as specified in the Bylaws.
- 2.5 **MRA Signatory** - A Full Member or a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body that has signed the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA and adheres to its requirements.
- 2.6 **Regional Cooperation Body** - a formally established regional cooperation of accreditation bodies that has met the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated requirements for Regional Cooperation Bodies as set out in the Constitution and the Bylaws.

3. WHAT THE GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA DELIVERS

- 3.1 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA establishes a framework to facilitate the acceptance of the equivalence of accredited conformity assessment results. It enables trade facilitation, supports regulatory acceptance, and fosters trust in accredited activities globally by ensuring accredited conformity assessment bodies operate under internationally recognised criteria.
- 3.2 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA provides:
- A voluntary framework for the global acceptance of the equivalence of accredited conformity assessment results.
 - A framework for collaboration amongst members to facilitate recognition of conformity assessment results produced by conformity assessment bodies (CABs) accredited by signatories across the world.
 - Confidence that accreditations granted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA signatory accreditation bodies are equally reliable in ensuring the competence, impartiality, and consistent operation of accredited CABs.
 - A foundational tool to support regulatory and market-based recognition programs, enhancing international confidence in accredited conformity assessment activities.
- 3.3 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA cannot:
- Ensure identical treatment or automatic acceptance of conformity assessment results under all conditions.
 - Override or replace other recognition mechanisms required by laws and regulations in the economies of its signatories.

4. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – STRUCTURE

- 4.1 There are five levels in the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA structure:

Level	Description	Explanation
Level 1		ISO/IEC 17011, which specifies the criteria for accreditation bodies, together with additional requirements that apply to accreditation body members, beyond those contained in ISO/IEC 17011 (Level 1).
Level 2	Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA main scope	<p>Accreditation Activities, in which the Accreditation Body has demonstrated competence to perform accreditation as specified by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, endorsed generic accreditation normative documents listed in Level 3.</p> <p>The accreditation activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing, including medical• Calibration

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification of management systems • Certification of persons • Certification of products, processes or services • Inspection • Validation and Verification • Proficiency Testing Provision • Reference Material Production • Biobanking
Level 3		<p>The generic normative documents used by the Accreditation Body to assess the competence of a Conformity Assessment Body for each activity in Level 2.</p> <p>The normative documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Testing: ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 • For Calibration: ISO/IEC 17025 • Certification of management systems: ISO/IEC 17021-1 • Certification of persons: ISO/IEC 17024 • Certification of product, processes or services: ISO/IEC 17065 • For Inspection: ISO/IEC 17020 • For Validation and Verification: ISO/IEC 17029 • For Provision of Proficiency Testing: ISO/IEC 17043 • For Production of Reference Materials: ISO 17034 • For Biobanking: ISO 20387
Level 4	Sector-Specific Normative Documents	<p>Sector-specific normative documents which specify internationally recognised applications of a generic normative document listed in Level 3. The application documents are used by the Accreditation Body, in combination with the generic normative documents listed in Level 3, to assess the competence of a Conformity Assessment Body in the relevant sector.</p> <p>For certain normative documents at Level 3, additional endorsed documents, to be used alongside the Level 3 standard, are documented in <i>Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA</i>.</p>
Level 5		<p>Conformity assessment normative documents used by the CAB. It includes the scope of accreditation of the CAB or a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-endorsed conformity assessment normative document used by the accredited CABs.</p> <p>The endorsed documents for Level 5 are documented in <i>Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA</i>.</p>

- 4.2 The procedure for managing and extending the scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, including the addition of new accreditation activities or normative documents, is defined in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-003 Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Scope of the Arrangement*.
- 4.3 The full scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA is documented in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA* and is published on the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated website at www.?????.org. Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMRA-001 does not require a separate membership ballot for publication, as corresponding decisions regarding the structure and scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA are approved in advance by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly under the procedures defined in this document.
- 4.4 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat is responsible for maintaining and updating FMRA-001, after a final check by the Chair of the Arrangement Committee to confirm accuracy and completeness.
- 4.5 Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated is responsible for ensuring that Full members comply with the requirements of the Level 1 document. Each Full Member that is recognised for a particular Level 2 scope must ensure that its accredited CABs comply with the applicable requirements outlined in the relevant Level 3 and Level 4 documents.
- 4.6 The scope of accreditation as required by Level 5 is maintained by the Full Member for each of its accredited CABs.

5. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – SCOPE

- 5.1 The parties to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA are Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Full Members and Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies that have signed the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA and adhere to its requirements. These parties, collectively referred to as Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Signatories, operate within the framework of this Arrangement and commit to maintaining compliance with its policies, principles, obligations, and procedures.

6. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

6.1. Multilateral Recognition and Equivalence

Signatories to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA commit to recognising within their scope of recognition, the accreditations granted by other signatories as equivalent to those granted by their own accreditation body. This ensures confidence in the reliability of conformity assessment results. This multilateral recognition supports the reduction of technical barriers to trade, facilitates international acceptance of accredited results, and strengthens trust in accredited activities globally.

6.2. Conformity with International Standards

Signatories to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA commit to complying with internationally recognised requirements and standards, promoting harmonised implementation of accreditation requirements across different sectors, and reinforcing global confidence in conformity assessment outcomes.

6.3. Transparency and Confidentiality

Signatories of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA commit to operating transparently while ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive information. Transparency includes clear communication of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated policies, peer evaluation results (where appropriate), and recognised MRA scopes.

Signatories of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA shall uphold confidentiality regarding commercially sensitive, proprietary, or evaluation-related information, ensuring trust and impartiality in the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated processes.

7. GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA – OBLIGATIONS

7.1. General Obligations for all MRA Signatories

Each Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Signatory agrees to abide by the obligations, policies, and principles of this Arrangement, ensuring continued adherence to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated requirements, peer evaluation obligations, and international standards as a condition of recognition under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.

Each Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Signatory shall:

- a) Recognise within its scope of recognition the accreditations granted by other signatories as equivalent to those granted by its own accreditation body, ensuring confidence in accredited conformity assessment results.

Note: Laws and regulations may have restrictions on the recognition of conformity assessment results as per Clause 7.9.
- b) Promote acceptance of accredited certificates and reports within the recognised scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, aligning with international best practices.
- c) Ensure that the role, benefits, scope, and limitations of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA are clearly communicated to stakeholders, regulators, and market participants to promote awareness and prevent misinterpretation.
- d) Provide peer evaluators for the evaluations of Regional Cooperation Bodies.
- e) Maintain confidentiality regarding any sensitive information obtained through the peer evaluation process, accreditation activities, or other Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-related processes.

7.2. Obligations of Full Members:

Each Accreditation Body signatory to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA shall:

- a) Maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 and other relevant international standards applicable to its recognition scope.
- b) Adhere to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA policies, procedures, and normative documents, ensuring consistent implementation of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated requirements.
- c) Ensure that all accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in accordance with applicable international standards and Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated requirements.
- d) Cooperate with other Accreditation Bodies to support the extension of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA and maintain confidence in the multilateral recognition framework.

7.3. Obligations of a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body

Each Recognised Regional Cooperation Body to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA shall:

- a) Maintain conformance with *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-004: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Cooperation Body* and ensure its peer evaluation procedures comply with *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-005: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body*.
- b) Ensure that all Regional Cooperation Body signatories maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 and other applicable international standards and normative documents.
- c) Ensure that peer evaluations of Accreditation Bodies, where those Accreditation Bodies are members of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, follow Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-recognised policies and procedures, ensuring the integrity and consistency of accreditation practices.
- d) Facilitate cross-border cooperation among Accreditation Bodies in accordance with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated policy.
- e) Investigate complaints or disputes arising from accreditation activities conducted within its region and support dispute resolution mechanisms within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated framework.
- f) Notify Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated within 30 days of any significant changes affecting its ability to meet the requirements for recognition.

7.4. Acceptance in the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA

- a) To apply to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, an Accreditation Body shall be an Associate member of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and be evaluated by a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body, in accordance with the relevant requirements and rules and procedures defined in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-005: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Single Accreditation Body*.
- b) To apply to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA a Regional Cooperation Body shall be evaluated by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, in accordance with the relevant requirements and rules and procedures defined in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-004: Requirements and Procedures for Evaluation of a Regional Cooperation Body*.
- c) Each accepted MRA Signatory shall complete a signature sheet authorised by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair.
- d) The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA becomes effective upon signature by the MRA Signatory and the Chair of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated.

7.5. Modification of Scope of Recognition

The scope of recognition of a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Signatory may be extended or reduced in accordance with the relevant rules, policies, and procedures. Requests for scope modifications must be submitted to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and shall follow the relevant procedures defined by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, which may include peer evaluation or other activities, before formal recognition. Any modification of the scope of recognition will be done according to *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-002: Multilateral Recognition Arrangement: Management of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*.

7.6. Withdrawal from the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA

If an MRA Signatory wishes to withdraw from the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA or withdraw part of its scope of recognition for any reason, it shall notify Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated in writing. In the case of full withdrawal, the signatory shall be removed from the official list of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA signatories. In the case of partial withdrawal, the relevant scope shall be amended in the official list. The procedure is described in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-002 Multilateral Recognition Arrangement: Management of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*.

7.7. Disputes, Complaints and Appeals

Any dispute, complaint or appeal will be addressed according to *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-MS-004 Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Procedures for Handling Disputes, Complaints and Appeals*.

7.8. Changes to the Text of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA

Any amendment of the text of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA shall be approved by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly according to *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MS-005 Management of Documents*.

7.9. National or International Law and the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA

It is recognised and accepted by each of the MRA signatories that the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA does not create any rights, liabilities or obligations that would have a binding effect in domestic or international law. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA by itself does not provide any recognition under any law or regulation in the economy of any signatory.

8. AMENDMENT TABLE

Section	Previous Version	Summary Of Changes

ANNEX 1 - Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA SIGNATURE SHEET

GLOBAL ACCREDITATION
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GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

SIGNATORIES

We, the undersigned, endorse the terms of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Arrangement and agree to abide by them to the best of our ability.

Full Member / Recognised Regional Cooperation Body:

Economy / Region:

Scope and date:

Authorised Representative:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chair, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Arrangement Committee:

Signature: _____ Date: _____