

GLOBAL ACCREDITATION  
COOPERATION INCORPORATED  
LOGO

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND  
EXPANSION OF THE SCOPE OF THE GLOBAL ACCREDITATION  
COOPERATION INCORPORATED ARRANGEMENT**

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## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. **Purpose:** This document outlines the policies and procedures used by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated for managing and expanding the scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA).
- 1.2. **Scope:** This procedure applies to Full Members, Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies and scheme owners.

It supports implementation of Section 4.2 of *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-001 Multilateral Recognition Arrangement: Structure, Scope and Obligations*, and is complemented by the information presented in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*.

**Note:** In this document, the term expansion is used to refer to the addition of new scopes under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, while the term extension is used to refer to the inclusion of new scopes for individual Accreditation bodies (ABs) and Regional Cooperation Bodies within their Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-recognised scopes.

## 2. STRUCTURE OF THE GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA

- 2.1. The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA is structured across five levels as defined in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-MRA-001.
- 2.2. Updates to *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated-FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA* shall follow the formal approval of any new scope or normative document by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly and shall reflect the current recognised activities and normative references under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.

## 3. CATEGORISATION FOR SCOPE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. To support consistent and effective implementation of procedures related to the management and expansion of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated has introduced a categorisation system that groups accreditation activities into two distinct categories. This approach provides a structured and transparent basis for determining the level of evaluation required for recognition under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
- 3.2. The categorisation system reflects the varying nature of accreditation activities and the extent to which conformity assessment bodies (CABs) rely on specific normative documents at the operational level. By distinguishing between activities that require endorsement at level 5 and those that do not, the model ensures that recognition processes remain proportionate, relevant, and credible.
- 3.3. Each category defines the levels of documentation and endorsement that must be reviewed and approved before an activity can be included in the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.

3.4. Activities are assigned to a category based on whether endorsement by the Arrangement Committee is required only at the level of the accreditation activity and generic normative documents (Levels 2, 3 and 4), or if endorsement is also required for specific schemes or documents used by CABs (Level 5). This distinction guides the procedures set out in Sections 4 and 5 of this document.

### **3.5. Category 1 – Scopes Not Requiring Endorsement at Level 5**

3.5.1 In this category, the evaluation and recognition process focuses on accreditation activities where specific normative documents or schemes must be evaluated for inclusion in the MRA at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Sector-specific normative documents (Level 4) may also be considered under this category when they are directly based on a Level 3 standard already used within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA and do not require endorsement of Level 5 normative documents used by conformity assessment bodies.

3.5.2 This category includes, at present, the following accreditation activities:

- a) Testing (including medical)
- b) Calibration
- c) Inspection
- d) Proficiency Testing Provision
- e) Reference Material Production
- f) Biobanking

### **3.6 Category 2 – Scopes Requiring Endorsement at Level 5**

3.6.1 In this category, the evaluation and recognition process focuses on accreditation activities where endorsement of Level 5 normative documents or schemes is required, in addition to the evaluation of Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

3.6.2 This category includes, at present, the following accreditation activities:

- a) Certification of management systems
- b) Certification of persons
- c) Certification of products, services and processes
- d) Validation and Verification

**Note:** In some cases, recognition under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA for accreditation activities falling under Category 2 may be granted where no specific Level 5 normative document exists or has been identified for a given Level 3 standard.

## **4. PROCEDURE FOR CATEGORY 1 – SCOPES NOT REQUIRING ENDORSEMENT AT LEVEL 5**

- 4.1. This section outlines the procedure for the addition of new accreditation activities or normative documents under Category 1 of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA. Recognition is based on the evaluation of conformance with requirements at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Sector-specific normative documents at Level 4 may also be included in this category when they are directly based on a Level 3 standard already used within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA and do not introduce additional requirements that necessitate endorsement at Level 5.
- 4.2. A proposal to add a new accreditation activity or normative document to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA under Category 1 may be submitted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Members, or any Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Committee or Working Group.
- 4.3. Proposals may address any of the following:
- 4.3.1 A new Level 2 activity with a new level 3 international standard or normative document that is already subject to accreditation by a number of Accreditation Bodies.
- 4.3.2 A new Level 3 standard or normative document applicable to Conformity Assessment Bodies and the attestation of their competence for a specific activity already recognised at Level 2.
- 4.3.3 A new Level 4 normative document that represents a sector-specific application of an existing Level 3 standard already in use for accreditation under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, where applicable.
- 4.4. The proposal shall include:
- a) A description of the proposed activity or document and its relevance to accreditation.
  - b) Justification for its inclusion under Category 1, including confirmation that Level 5 endorsement is not required.
  - c) Reference to supporting documentation and usage by existing Accreditation Bodies.
  - d) Indication of whether the activity is already being performed by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members.
- 4.5. Following a positive determination by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee to proceed, the proposal shall be referred to the relevant Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated committees for review and input, depending on the nature and scope of the proposed expansion.
- 4.6. The Accreditation Committee shall review the proposal to evaluate alignment with ISO/IEC 17011, the consistency of accreditation practices across members, and the need for new or revised Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated application documents. The committee shall consider whether the proposed activity or document is compatible with the principles of impartiality. The committee may also consider how the proposal supports harmonisation and clarity in implementation by Accreditation Bodies.

- 4.7 The Arrangement Committee (ARC) shall review the proposal to determine its alignment with the overall structure and principles of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, including its compatibility with existing recognition pathways and policies. The committee shall consider whether the proposed scope fits within the established framework for recognition and peer evaluation under the MRA, and whether any changes to MRA policy or structure may be required. The Arrangement Committee is also responsible for confirming the appropriate classification of the proposed standards or normative documents within the levels defined in the Structure of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
- 4.8 The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) shall be consulted to assess the operational feasibility of implementing the proposed expansion. This may include evaluating the readiness of the peer evaluation process to accommodate the new scope, the availability of qualified evaluators, and any required updates to procedural documentation or training materials. The AMC is also responsible for defining the evaluation process for the new area in accordance with clause 4.14 of this procedure. The AMC may further advise on implementation planning, resource needs, and other practical considerations, and may report such findings to the Arrangement Committee and General Assembly.
- 4.9 The appropriate Technical Committee(s) shall be consulted to provide subject-specific input on the technical relevance and applicability of the proposed activity or normative document and the need for new or revised Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated technical application documents. The committee shall consider whether the document is sufficiently robust and developed through an appropriate process, whether the activity is already performed or expected to be performed by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members, and whether it supports the recognition of competence in the relevant area.
- 4.10 Each committee may consult other Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated bodies (such as the Stakeholder Committee or other Technical Committees) and may request additional information or clarification from the proposer. Following their respective reviews, each committee shall submit a recommendation to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee, indicating whether the proposal should proceed to the General Assembly decision.
- 4.11 Based on the recommendations received from the relevant committees, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee shall determine whether the proposal is ready to proceed to a decision by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly.
- 4.12 The proposal, including all supporting documentation and the recommendations of the reviewing committees, shall be circulated to all Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members for decision. The vote may be conducted either during a General Assembly or by means of a 30-day electronic ballot. The General Assembly shall make the final decision on whether to approve the addition of the proposed activity or normative document to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA under Category 1.
- 4.13 If approved, the following actions shall be taken:
- 4.13.1 The new activity or normative document shall be included in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*.
- 4.13.2 A formal communication shall be issued to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members notifying them of the approved scope expansion and its effective date.

4.13.3 The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) shall oversee any required implementation actions, such as finalisation of procedural documentation, training activities, or evaluator designation.

#### **4.14 Principles for Extension Requirements:**

4.14.1 Based on the proposal of the Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) the Arrangement Committee (ARC) will decide on the evaluation activities required to extend the MRA scope of Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies and Accreditation Bodies.

4.14.2 A request to extend recognition for a new Level 2 activity and Level 3 international standard or normative document applicable to a CAB or for a new Level 3 standard under a specific activity already recognised at Level 2 activity shall require an on-site evaluation for Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies and Accreditation Bodies.

4.14.3 When a new Level 4 document is added under Category 1, and the Regional Cooperation Body or Accreditation Body is already recognised for the related Level 2 and Level 3 scopes, the extension may be granted based on a formal declaration. This declaration shall confirm the Accreditation Body's implementation of the Level 4 document in accordance with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated guidance and the absence of any conflicting requirements.

## **5 PROCEDURE FOR CATEGORY 2 – SCOPES REQUIRING ENDORSEMENT AT LEVEL 5**

5.1 This section sets out the procedure for adding new accreditation activities or normative documents under Category 2 of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA. Scopes falling under this category always require endorsement of specific Level 5 normative documents used by CABs. In addition to evaluation of conformance with requirements at Levels 1, 2 and 3, related Level 4 normative documents must be reviewed when they introduce sector-specific requirements linked to the endorsed Level 5 documents.

5.2 Proposals under Category 2 may involve:

- a) a new accreditation activity (Level 2),
- b) a new normative document (Level 3), or
- c) schemes or normative documents that require endorsement at Level 5.

5.3 The procedures for expanding the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA under Category 2 are set out in the following sections:

- Section 5.4: Endorsement of Category 2 New Level 2, New Level 3, and Public Schemes.
- Section 5.5: Endorsement of Category 2 Privately Owned Sector Schemes.

## **5.4 Endorsement of Category 2 New Level 2, New Level 3, and Public Schemes**

- 5.4.1 This section outlines the procedures for expanding the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA to include new accreditation activities (Level 2), new normative documents (Level 3), or publicly owned schemes that fall under Category 2. Recognition of these scopes requires endorsement of the relevant Level 5 normative documents used by CABs. Related Level 4 normative documents shall also be reviewed when they introduce sector-specific requirements connected to the endorsed Level 5 documents.
- 5.4.2 For the purposes of this procedure, publicly owned (including regulatory) normative documents are documents from international, regional or national standardisation/standard-setting organisations or regulatory authorities.
- 5.4.3 A proposal to add a new accreditation activity (Level 2), normative document (Level 3), or publicly owned scheme (including Level 4 or Level 5 documents) under Category 2 may be submitted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Members, or any Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Committee or Working Group.
- 5.4.4 Proposals may address any of the following:
- a) A new Level 2 activity with a new level 3 international standard or normative document that is already subject to accreditation by a number of Accreditation Bodies.
  - b) A new Level 3 standard or normative document applicable to Conformity Assessment Bodies and the attestation of their competence for a specific activity already recognised at Level 2.
  - c) A new Level 4 normative document that represents a sector-specific application of an existing Level 3 standard already in use for accreditation under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
  - d) A new Level 5 conformity assessment normative document used by Conformity Assessment Bodies.
- 5.4.5 Following a positive determination by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee to proceed, the proposal shall be referred to the relevant Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated committees for review and input, depending on the nature and scope of the proposed expansion.
- 5.4.6 The Accreditation Committee shall review the proposal to evaluate alignment with ISO/IEC 17011, the consistency of accreditation practices across members, and the need for new or revised Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated application documents. The committee shall consider whether the proposed activity or document is compatible with the principles of impartiality and whether it supports harmonisation and clarity in implementation by Accreditation Bodies.

- 5.4.7 The Arrangement Committee (ARC) shall review the proposal to determine its alignment with the overall structure and principles of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, including its compatibility with existing recognition pathways and policies. The committee shall consider whether the proposed scope fits within the established framework for recognition and peer evaluation under the MRA, and whether any changes to MRA policy or structure may be required. The Arrangement Committee is also responsible for confirming the appropriate classification of the proposed standards or normative documents within the levels defined in the Structure of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
- 5.4.8 The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) shall be consulted to assess the operational feasibility of implementing the proposed expansion. This may include evaluating the readiness of the peer evaluation process to accommodate the new scope, the availability of qualified evaluators, and any required updates to procedural documentation or training materials. The AMC is also responsible for defining the evaluation process for the new area in accordance with clause 6.14 of this procedure. The AMC may further advise on implementation planning, resource needs, and other practical considerations, and may report such findings to the Arrangement Committee and General Assembly.
- 5.4.9 The appropriate Technical Committee(s) shall be consulted to provide subject-specific input on the technical relevance and applicability of the proposed activity or normative document and the need for new or revised Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated technical application documents. The committee shall consider whether the document is sufficiently robust and developed through an appropriate process, whether the activity is already performed or expected to be performed by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members, and whether it supports the recognition of competence in the relevant area.
- 5.4.10 Each committee may consult other Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated bodies (such as the Stakeholder Committee or other Technical Committees) and may request additional information or clarification from the proposer. Following their respective reviews, each committee shall submit a recommendation to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee, indicating whether the proposal should proceed to the General Assembly decision.
- 5.4.11 Based on the recommendations received from the relevant committees, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee shall determine whether the proposal is ready to proceed to a decision by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated General Assembly.
- 5.4.12 The proposal, including all supporting documentation and the recommendations of the reviewing committees, shall be circulated to all Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members for decision. The vote may be conducted either during a General Assembly or by means of a 30-day electronic ballot. The General Assembly shall make the final decision on whether to approve the addition of the proposed activity or normative document to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA under Category 2.
- 5.4.13 If approved, the following actions shall be taken:
- a) The new activity or normative document shall be included in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*.

- b) A formal communication shall be issued to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members notifying them of the approved scope expansion and its effective date.
- c) The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) shall oversee any required implementation actions, such as finalisation of procedural documentation, training activities, or evaluator designation.

#### **5.4.14 Principles for extension requirements:**

- a) Based on the proposal of the Arrangement Management Committee (AMC), the Arrangement Committee (ARC) will decide on the evaluation activities required to extend the MRA scope of Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies and Accreditation Bodies.
- b) A request to extend recognition for a new Level 2 activity and Level 3 international standard or normative document applicable to a CAB or for a new Level 3 standard under a specific activity already recognised at Level 2 shall require an on-site evaluation for Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies and Accreditation Bodies.
- c) When a new Level 4 or Level 5 document is added under Category 2, and the Regional Cooperation Body or Accreditation Body is already recognised for the related Level 2 and Level 3 scopes, the extension may be granted based on a formal declaration. This declaration shall confirm that the Accreditation Body has appropriately incorporated the relevant Level 4 or Level 5 normative document into its accreditation activities, in accordance with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated guidance and the absence of any conflicting requirements.

## **5.5 Endorsement of Category 2 Privately Owned Sector Schemes**

### **5.5.1 Policy for endorsement of privately owned sector schemes**

- 5.5.1.1 Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated supports the inclusion of privately owned, third-party international sector schemes within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, provided they meet the requirements of this procedure.
- 5.5.1.2 Endorsement of such schemes under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA enables Accreditation Bodies and Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated committees to contribute their expertise to the evaluation and development of the scheme, and to ensure it is effectively integrated within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated peer evaluation process.
- 5.5.1.3 The endorsement of a privately owned sector scheme under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA confirms that the scheme meets the procedural and structural requirements for recognition and peer evaluation. It does not constitute a judgment on the commercial value or technical superiority of the scheme, nor does it imply preference over other schemes within the same sector.

- 5.5.1.4 Only Scheme Owners who are Stakeholder Members of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated may submit an application for endorsement under Category 2 of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
- 5.5.1.5 The Scheme Owner shall designate a liaison representative who holds decision-making authority for the scheme and is responsible for responding to technical or administrative queries from Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated within a maximum of seven (7) days. The liaison's name and contact details shall be included in the application and maintained throughout the endorsement process and subsequent monitoring.
- 5.5.1.6 The evaluation of sector schemes under this procedure shall be based on the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated criteria for endorsement, as defined in *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated TECH-3-019: Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes (CASs) and Scheme Owners (SOs)*, and applied using the corresponding evaluation tools approved by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated, including the requirements outlined in Annex A: Application for Endorsement of a Privately Owned Scheme under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.
- 5.5.1.7 All scheme-relevant documentation shall be made available at no charge to Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated and its Members for evaluation and implementation purposes. The Scheme Owner shall also agree to cover reasonable fees charged by the Accreditation Bodies assigned to evaluate the scheme, unless a prior evaluation has been conducted by a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body under equivalent requirements and is accepted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated for use in the endorsement process.

## **5.5.2 Procedure for endorsement of privately owned sector schemes**

- 5.5.2.1 The Scheme Owner shall submit a formal application to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat. This application shall include:
- a) A completed application form as defined in Annex A: Application for Endorsement of a Privately Owned Scheme;
  - b) The applicable scheme documents; and
  - c) A completed version of *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-007: Scheme Evaluation Checklist*, based on *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated TECH-3-019 Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes (CASs) and Scheme Owners (SOs)*.
- 5.5.2.2 Upon receipt of the complete application, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat shall circulate the documentation to:
- a) The Chair of the Arrangement Management Committee (AMC), which oversees the operational implementation and procedural integrity of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated peer evaluation system;

- b) The Chair of Technical Committee 3, responsible for matters relating to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies performing certification of management systems, persons, products, processes and services, as well as validation and verification activities; and
- c) The Chair of the Stakeholder Committee.

5.5.2.3 Based on the feedback received from the Arrangement Management Committee, Technical Committee 3, and the Stakeholder Committee, the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee shall determine whether to initiate the formal endorsement process.

5.5.2.4 If the Executive Committee approves the initiation of the formal endorsement process, a Task Force Group (TFG) shall be established. The TFG shall be automatically composed of the Chairs, or representatives designated by the Chairs, of:

- a) The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC)
- b) Technical Committee 3
- c) The Stakeholder Committee

The Committee Chairpersons may assign relevant issues to sub-structures within their respective committees during the scope expansion process, to support a more efficient and specialised evaluation.

5.5.2.5 The Chair of the Arrangement Management Committee shall serve as the Lead of the Task Force Group (TFG), with support from the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat. The TFG Lead shall coordinate the evaluation process, act as the primary liaison with the Scheme Owner and the assigned Accreditation Bodies and ensure timely reporting to the Executive Committee. The TFG Lead is responsible for managing the workflow, consolidating inputs, and facilitating resolution of outstanding issues during the endorsement process.

5.5.2.6 To support the evaluation process, the TFG shall:

- a) Request that each Recognised Regional Cooperation Body propose one Accreditation Body from its region interested in evaluating the scheme. These ABs must be Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Full Members recognised for the main scope the scheme is based upon. Preference shall be given to ABs already experienced in accrediting CABs under the scheme.
- b) Assign at least two Accreditation Bodies from two different Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies where the scheme is active or expected to be active, to evaluate the scheme. In exceptional cases, the Executive Committee may approve the assignment of both ABs from the same region.
- c) Ensure that the evaluation is conducted using:
  - Annex A: Application for Endorsement of a Privately Owned Scheme; and

- *FMRA-007: Scheme Evaluation Checklist*, based on *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated TECH-3-019 Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes (CASs) and Scheme Owners (SOs)*.
- d) If a prior evaluation has been conducted by a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body using the applicable criteria, its results may be used by the assigned AB from that region.
- 5.5.2.7 Once the Accreditation Bodies have been formally assigned by the TFG Lead, with the support of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat:
- a) The Scheme Owner shall be informed of the AB assignments;
  - b) The Scheme Owner shall be requested to:
    - i) Respond promptly to any queries from the assigned Accreditation Bodies; and
    - ii) Acknowledge any fees communicated by the ABs for their evaluation services.
- 5.5.2.8 Each assigned Accreditation Body shall complete its independent evaluation of the scheme using:
- Annex A: Application for Endorsement of a Privately Owned Scheme; and
  - *FMRA-007: Scheme Evaluation Checklist*, based on *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated TECH-3-019: Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes (CASs) and Scheme Owners (SOs)*.
- 5.5.2.9 After completing their individual evaluations, the two ABs shall:
- a) Share their findings with one another;
  - b) Reach a mutual conclusion on the adequacy and alignment of the scheme with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated requirements;
  - c) Where necessary, request clarifications or modifications from the Scheme Owner, who shall respond without undue delay to any such requests; and
  - d) Prepare a consolidated report detailing the joint evaluation findings.
- 5.5.2.10 The assigned Accreditation Bodies, in collaboration with a representative of the Scheme Owner, shall prepare and agree on a proposed implementation plan/work program for the proposed new sector scheme, which shall:
- i) Identify the aspects of the scheme that are ready for integration into the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA;

- ii) Identify any needs and expectations of the sector scheme that can currently be met under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated framework; and
- iii) Identify those needs and expectations that will require further scheme development or clarification prior to full implementation.

5.5.2.11 The joint evaluation report and proposed implementation plan shall be submitted to the TFG Lead following completion of the Accreditation Bodies' evaluation and mutual conclusion.

5.5.2.12 The TFG shall review the submitted documents. If satisfied, the TFG shall work with the Scheme Owner to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or equivalent agreement describing the roles, obligations, and follow-up actions related to scheme endorsement under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA.

5.5.2.13 Once the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been finalised, the TFG Lead, with support from the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Secretary, shall circulate to all MRA Full Members the evaluation report, implementation plan, the MoU and scheme documentation for a 30-day comment period.

5.5.2.14 Following the comment period:

- a) The TFG and the assigned Accreditation Bodies (if needed) shall review all feedback received from Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Full Members.
- b) The TFG may liaise with the Scheme Owner, where necessary, to clarify or address concerns and close out any outstanding issues or required changes to the scheme.
- c) A revised implementation plan or endorsement package may be prepared if significant adjustments are made based on member comments.
- d) Once all issues are resolved and the documentation finalised, the TFG shall prepare a formal proposal for the endorsement of the privately owned Level 5 normative document and submit it to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee for consideration and approval.

5.5.2.15 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Executive Committee shall consider the final proposal and make a decision on whether to approve the endorsement.

5.5.2.16 The overall process from 5.5.2.1 to 5.5.2.16 should not exceed six (6) months. The MRA Secretary provides timelines for every activity to complete the evaluation process within six months.

- 5.5.2.17 Upon Executive Committee approval, the proposal, including all supporting documentation, shall be circulated to all Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated members for decision. The vote may be conducted either during a General Assembly or by means of a 30-day electronic ballot. The General Assembly shall make the final decision on whether to approve the addition of the proposed privately owned Level 5 normative document to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA under Category 2.
- 5.5.2.18 A newly endorsed Level 4 and Level 5 normative document shall become part of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA once the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Chair and a delegated management representative of the Scheme Owner have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), following successful approval by the General Assembly in accordance with clause 5.5.2.17.
- 5.5.2.19 The newly endorsed normative documents, shall be added to the document *Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-001: Structure and Normative Documents under the Scope of Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA*, as described in clause 2.2.
- 5.5.2.20 Requests from Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies or Accreditation Bodies to extend their recognition to newly endorsed Level 4 and/or Level 5 normative documents may be submitted after:
- a) The Technical Committee 3 has developed or updated any necessary Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated application documents, if required; and
  - b) The Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) has determined any additional measures needed for incorporation into the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated peer evaluation process.
- 5.5.2.21 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Secretariat shall notify all members when applications for recognition under the new Level 4 and/or 5 normative documents are accepted.

### **5.5.3 Ongoing maintenance of endorsed privately owned schemes**

- 5.5.3.1 Once a privately owned normative document has been endorsed and included within the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, any subsequent revision or update to the endorsed document shall be subject to review under this clause.
- 5.5.3.2 The Scheme Owner shall submit the new draft (when only editorial changes are proposed) or final revised version of the document(s) to the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat. The submission shall include:
- a) A detailed gap analysis highlighting all changes between the endorsed version and the revised version;
  - b) A proposed transition plan outlining how ABs and CABs are expected to implement the changes;
  - c) Any other supporting documentation necessary for the review.

- 5.5.3.3 The Secretariat shall notify the Chair of Technical Committee 3 and the Chair of the Arrangement Management Committee (AMC), who shall each designate at least one competent person to:
- a) Review the submission;
  - b) Evaluate the adequacy of the proposed transition period for implementation by ABs and CABs;
  - c) Assess whether the revised scheme continues to comply with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated TECH-3-019 and the criteria originally used for its endorsement.
- 5.5.3.4 The designated reviewers shall submit their assessment to the Chairs of the Technical Committee and the AMC. Based on this input, the Chairs shall determine:
- a) If the changes are editorial or minor and do not affect the integrity or scope of the scheme, the revised documents shall be approved for continued recognition under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA;
  - b) If the changes are substantial, in which case a new evaluation shall be initiated following the process described in clause 5.2.7 onward.
- 5.5.3.5 If a new evaluation is required, the Chair of the AMC, as TFG Lead, with support from the Secretariat, shall:
- a) Reconstitute the original Task Force Group (TFG) or form a new TFG if the original members are no longer available;
  - b) Assign one or more Accreditation Bodies, preferably from the original evaluation team, or new ones if needed, to conduct the evaluation under clause 5.2.9;
  - c) Coordinate the re-evaluation and endorsement steps as required, including updates to the implementation plan and communication with the Scheme Owner.
- 5.5.3.6 Upon successful completion of the re-evaluation and approval by the General Assembly, the revised normative documents shall replace the previously endorsed version in the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated FMRA-001.
- 5.5.3.7 The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated Secretariat shall notify all members of the approval and update the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA status accordingly on the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated website.

## 6 AMENDMENT TABLE

Section	Previous Version	Summary Of Changes
All	-	Initial issue of document

## ANNEX A – APPLICATION FOR ENDORSEMENT OF A PRIVATELY OWNED SCHEME UNDER THE GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED MRA

This Annex defines the minimum information that a Scheme Owner must submit as part of the application for endorsement of a privately owned conformity assessment scheme under the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA, Category 2 (Level 5 normative document). The information provided will be used to assess the eligibility and suitability of the scheme for inclusion in the MRA.

Requirement	Information and/or evidence of how the requirement is met or to be met (To be completed by the Scheme Owner)	Comments (To be filled in by the assigned ABs involved in the review and, where required, by the TFG)
<b>1. General Information</b>		
a) Name of the scheme		
b) Name and legal status of the Scheme Owner		
c) Contact person and contact details		
d) Website and publicly available references (if any)		
e) Description of the legal ownership and governance structure of the scheme		
<b>2. Scope and Objectives</b>		
a) Conformity assessment activity (e.g., certification of persons, products, management systems, validation, verification)		
b) Sector(s) or industry(ies) addressed by the scheme		
c) Intended purpose of the scheme (e.g., regulatory compliance, voluntary market access, sustainability)		
d) Target users (e.g., CABs, regulators, buyers, end-users)		
<b>3. Scheme Content and Structure</b>		
a) List of scheme documents (including document codes, titles, and issue dates)		
b) Indication of mandatory vs. guidance documents		

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Information and/or evidence of how the requirement is met or to be met (To be completed by the Scheme Owner)</b>	<b>Comments (To be filled in by the assigned ABs involved in the review and, where required, by the TFG)</b>
c) Requirements for CABs (competence, impartiality, operational procedures)		
d) Requirements for the certification/validation/verification process (e.g., audit methods, duration, sampling)		
e) Rules for issuance, surveillance, and withdrawal of certificates or statements		
f) Transition provisions and version control procedures		
g) Description of the development and review process for scheme documents, including mechanisms to ensure openness, transparency, participation by interested parties, and avoidance of discriminatory practices.		
h) Confirmation that normative documents are made available free of charge for use by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Full Members and their applicants, and at a fair and reasonable cost to accredited bodies.		
i) Identification of any specific requirements for Accreditation Bodies (ABs) imposed by the scheme. Include justification and implementation guidance		
j) The scheme shall indicate whether it includes requirements for Accreditation Bodies (ABs) that go beyond ISO/IEC 17011.  If such requirements exist, the Scheme Owner shall provide specific details and indicate where in the scheme documentation these requirements are located.		
k) The scheme shall indicate whether it includes requirements for Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) that go beyond the appropriate Level 3 standard		

Requirement	Information and/or evidence of how the requirement is met or to be met (To be completed by the Scheme Owner)	Comments (To be filled in by the assigned ABs involved in the review and, where required, by the TFG)
<p>applied by Accreditation Bodies (e.g., ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17029, ISO/IEC 17024).</p> <p>If such requirements exist, the Scheme Owner shall provide specific details and indicate where in the scheme documentation these requirements are located.</p>		
<p>l) The scheme shall identify the Level 5 normative documents (e.g., ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 22000, or other sector-specific standards) used by CABs accredited under the scheme.</p> <p>The Scheme Owner shall provide specific details of these documents and indicate where they can be located.</p>		
<b>4. Oversight and Integrity Mechanisms</b>		
a) Process for approval and oversight of CABs operating under the scheme		
b) Mechanism to ensure impartiality and manage conflicts of interest		
c) Mechanism for handling complaints and appeals		
d) Processes to support continuous improvement of the scheme		
e) Confirms that no discrimination against ABs wishing to provide accreditation to a Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA-endorsed sector scheme is contained in the scheme.		
<b>5. Alignment and Compatibility</b>		
a) Reference to applicable ISO/IEC standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17065, 17024, 17021-1, 17029)		
b) Description of alignment with <i>Global Accreditation Cooperation</i>		

Requirement	Information and/or evidence of how the requirement is met or to be met (To be completed by the Scheme Owner)	Comments (To be filled in by the assigned ABs involved in the review and, where required, by the TFG)
<i>Incorporated TECH-3-019: Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes (CASs) and Scheme Owners (SOs)</i>		
c) Evidence of acceptance or recognition by regulatory authorities or significant market users (e.g., purchasers, industry bodies)		
d) A formal confirmation that the scheme does not contain provisions that contradict or exclude any requirement of the applicable ISO/IEC standard (Level 3) on which it is based		
e) Explanation of how the scheme plans to use Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Full Members as Accreditation Bodies and benefit from the international recognition and technical expertise they offer. Include examples if available.		
f) Commitment to use or co-develop application documents specifying requirements for Accreditation Bodies and Conformity Assessment Bodies, where required by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated		
<b>6. Use and Recognition</b>		
a) Extent to which the scheme is already used or accepted by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated MRA Full Members		
b) List of CABs currently operating under the scheme		
c) Geographical coverage (List of economies where the scheme is currently in use and intended use)		
d) Indication of whether the scheme is used under regulatory frameworks, voluntary programs, or both		
<b>7. Additional Information</b>		
a) Reports or outcomes of any previous evaluations conducted by		

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Information and/or evidence of how the requirement is met or to be met (To be completed by the Scheme Owner)</b>	<b>Comments (To be filled in by the assigned ABs involved in the review and, where required, by the TFG)</b>
regional or accreditation bodies (attach if available)		
b) Known limitations or challenges related to implementation or interpretation		
c) Other supporting documentation the Scheme Owner considers relevant		