
i-NAF MULTI-LATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA)



i-NAF
MULTI-LATERAL RECOGNITION
ARRANGEMENT (MLA)

Issue No 1

Prepared by: i-NAF MLA-C
Issue Date: 08.01.2018

Date: 02.01.2018
Application Date: Immediate

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Multi-Lateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) has been established in accordance with the International Natural Accreditation Forum-NBE Foundation.(i-NAF) Bylaws and specifies member obligations and ensuring compliance that form the basis for mutual recognition and support.

1.2 Any amendment of the text of this MLA shall be approved by the i-NAF General Assembly.

2 ARRANGEMENT

The parties to this MLA are the Natural Accreditation Bodies on whose behalf the MLA has been signed (MLA Group).

3 OBLIGATIONS

3.1 Abide by the International Natural Accreditation Forum-NBE Foundation.(i-NAF) Bylaws and the rules and procedures developed by i-NAF and maintain conformance with the list of normative documents contained in i-NAF NMFR 12;

3.1.1 Have carried out and granted at least one accreditation in each of the scopes of the MLA for which it applies;

3.1.2 Specify the acceptable routes for traceability, and assess its implementation by NCABs

3.2 Ensure that all accredited natural conformity assessment bodies conform to the relevant normative documents contained in i-NAF NMFR 12;

3.2.1 Have demonstrated experience in operating an accreditation body, and have access to technical expertise in all aspects of its accreditation activities;

3.3 Promote the acceptance and equivalence of accredited natural conformity assessment certificates issued with the endorsement of a signatory within the scope of this i-NAF MLA;

3.3.1 Have ongoing processes for actively promoting the MLA with major stakeholders;

3.4 Promote the world-wide acceptance and equivalence of accreditations granted by signatories to the i-NAF MLA.

3.5 Contribute actively to the work of the i-NAF MLA Group and co-operate with other accreditation bodies so that the i-NAF MLA may be extended.

3.6 Respond positively to requests from the i-NAF MLA Committee (MLA-C) for the provision of suitable peer evaluators for the peer evaluation of i-NAF MLA Group members and applicants.

3.6.1 The MLA-C is responsible for ensuring that all natural accreditation bodies contribute equitably to peer evaluation teams.

3.6.2 If an accreditation body is unable to provide a peer evaluator from its internal resources, it shall accept responsibility for contracting and paying for a sub-contract peer evaluator to perform the evaluation in its behalf.

3.6.3 The MLA-C shall maintain a list of suitably qualified sub-contract peer evaluators for this purpose.

i-NAF MULTI-LATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA)

- 3.7 Investigate all complaints initiated by a participating body resulting from certificates of conformity issued by the bodies it has accredited within its accreditation program,
- 3.8 Notify all other participating bodies as soon as possible of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in its status, in the operational practices of its system or in its accreditation programs,
- 3.9 Participate actively in the meetings of the i-NAF Technical Committee and of the i-NAF MLA Group;
- 3.10 Use all information in a confidential and professional manner.
- 3.11 If, in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures, it is agreed that an additional accreditation body that operates a system may participate in the MLA, an MLA Signature Sheet shall be signed by the new accreditation body and duly authorized by the i-NAF Chair, or in the absence of the i-NAF Chair, the i-NAF Vice-Chair.
- 3.12 The new signatory shall be added to the General Letter Advising MLA Signatories (i-NAF NPG 9). The same procedure shall be followed if it is agreed that a participant to the MLA may extend its accreditation programs.
- 3.13 Pay i-NAF membership fees and other expenses agreed to by the General Assembly in a timely manner including reimbursement of peer evaluation expenses incurred by peer evaluation team members.

4 VOTING OF i-NAF DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 i-NAF will not seek endorsement of a i-NAF MLA document without first gaining the support of the i-NAF MLA Committee for the relevant document.
- 4.2 Members are to return all ballots in a timely manner. Members risk suspension if they miss more than 2 votes in a year.

5 MEMBERS WISHING TO WITHDRAW FROM THE i-NAF MLA

- 5.1 If a participating body wishes to withdraw from this MLA, that body shall notify the Chair of the MLA Committee in writing through the i-NAF Secretariat not later than three months in advance of its intention to withdraw.
- 5.2 Upon withdrawal of a body, the body's MLA Signature Sheet shall be withdrawn.

6 STRUCTURE OF THE i-NAF MLA

The i-NAF MLA is structured to enable integration with the IAF MLA structure which uses five (5) levels.

Level 1: ISO/IEC 17011 / NSO-NAP X / OIC/SMIIC 3 etc. specifies the criteria for an accreditation body. Level 1 may also include additional requirements for the application of ISO/IEC 17011/ NSO-NAP X / OIC/SMIIC 3 etc. to a specific type of accreditation activity.

Level 2: Is a description of the type of accreditation activity for example 'Accreditation of Natural Product Certification Bodies (NPCB)'.

i-NAF MULTI-LATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA)

Level 3: Identifies the generic accreditation criteria (i.e. criteria for CABs) applicable to a 'framework' Multi-Lateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) i.e. main-scope of MLA, where CABs (NCABs) accredited by signatory ABs(NABs) to such MLA are recognized as being equally reliable.

Level 3 Scope: Product certification

- OIC/SMIIC 2 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for Bodies Providing Halal Certification
- ISO/IEC 17065 - General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems
- ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

Level 4: Identifies the accreditation criteria, in addition to the Level 3 generic accreditation criteria, which is applicable to a sub-scope of a 'framework' MLA (main-scope of MLA), where NCABs (CABs) accredited by signatory NABs (ABs) to such sub-scope are recognized as being equally reliable.

Level 5: identifies the conformity assessment standards (e.g. certification standard) applicable to a sub-scope of a 'framework' MLA (main-scope of MLA), which enable the conformity assessment results issued by NCABs (CABs) accredited by signatory NABs (ABs) to such sub-scope are recognized as being equivalent.

Level 5 Sub-Scope: Product certification

- NSO-NAP 1 Natural Product Standard For Food,
- NSO-NAP 2 Halal Natural Standard For Food and Food-Related (packaging etc.) Products and/or OIC/SMIIC 1 General Guidelines on Halal Food,
- NSO-NAP 3 Ecogloballabels Schema
(ISO 14021, ISO 14024, ISO 14025-Environmental labels standards)
- NSO-NAP 7 Vegan Vegetarian Standard
- NSO-NAP 10 Hygiene, Health and Safety Management System Scheme

7 i-NAF ENDORSED NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

7.1 All i-NAF members are required to adopt all of the normative documents applicable to their scope of activities.