



**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**



**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR A
MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION
ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL
ACCREDITATION BODIES**

Issue No 1

Prepared by: i-NAF General Secretary

Date: 02.01.2018

Endorsed by: i-NAF MLA-C

Date: 02.01.2018

Approved by: i-NAF MLA Group

Date: 05.01.2018

Issue Date: 08.01.2018

Application Date: Immediate

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The International Natural Accreditation Forum (i-NAF) is comprised of accreditation bodies that accredit natural certification bodies, and other interested parties. To serve its constituency, i-NAF has established a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (i-NAF MLA), based on the demonstrated outcomes of member natural accreditation bodies operations.
- 1.2 The aim of the MLA is to facilitate international trade by encouraging worldwide acceptance of valid accredited natural certificates, and thus reducing the need for multiple audits.
- 1.3 The MLA recognizes the competence of signatories to conduct operations specified within the scope of the MLA and serves to increase national and international confidence in the accreditations issued by those signatories. The MLA establishes formal links among competent accreditation bodies in other economies and promotes closer technological ties among those economies.
- 1.4 This document defines the policies and procedures that the i-NAF to establish and maintain the MLA among accreditation bodies that are signatories to the i-NAF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

2 REFERENCES

i-NAF NML 1	i-NAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (i-NAF MLA)
i-NAF NML 4	i-NAF Procedure for Qualification, Training and Monitoring of Peer Evaluators
i-NAF NMFR 1	Checklist – MLA Applications
i-NAF NMFR 2	i-NAF MLA Application Form
i-NAF NMFR 1	i-NAF Peer Evaluation Report
i-NAF NMFR 8	Peer Evaluation Feedback Form
i-NAF NMFR 12	List of i-NAF Endorsed Normative Documents
i-NAF NPG 5	Structure of i-NAF
i-NAF NPG 6	i-NAF Procedure for Confidentiality
i-NAF NPG 5	i-NAF MLA Letter of Equivalence
IAF/ILAC-A2 , A3 and OTHER FORUM DOCUMENTS/GUIDES	

3 ABBREVIATIONS

i-NAF:	International Natural Accreditation Forum
IHAF:	International Halal Accreditation Forum
IAF:	International Accreditation Forum, Inc.
NSO/NCASC:	NSO-Natural Standardizations Organization Committee on Natural Conformity Assessment
SMIIC	The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries
MLA:	Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
MLA Group:	The group comprising the natural accreditation bodies that are signatories of the i-NAF MLA
MLA C:	MLA Committee with authority to manage the MLA procedures and process.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

General Assembly: The formal name of the Board of Directors and the i-NAF membership group comprising all signatories to the i-NAF MoU.

4 CRITERIA

The natural accreditation bodies that are signatories to the i-NAF MoU must demonstrate conformance with the normative documents in i-NAF, the i-NAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement, and related i-NAF Natural Mandatory Documents.

5 PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING RECOGNITION

The initial evaluation and periodic re-evaluation process of an natural accreditation body for the purpose of obtaining recognition by i-NAF involves the following basic steps:

- Application to Join the MLA
- Selection and appointment of an evaluation team
- Document review
- On-site Evaluation
- Reporting
- Decision making and Acceptance into the MLA
- Maintenance of MLA

6 APPLICATION TO JOIN THE MLA

- 6.1 An applicant accreditation body shall submit its written application in English to the i-NAF Secretariat using i-NAF NMFR 2.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of an application, the i-NAF Secretariat shall complete i-NAF NMFR 1.
- 6.3 According to the level(s) of MLA applied for (see i-NAF NML 4) and types of peer evaluations, the application shall be processed as follows:
 - a) If the application is from a non-MLA Group member for an initial evaluation, the completed i-NAF NMFR 1 shall be forwarded to the MLA-C for review and endorsement. It shall then be forwarded to the MLA Group for ballot.
 - b) If the application is from an existing MLA Group member for extension of a main scope or a sub-scope, the MLA-C and the MLA Group shall be notified that the application has been accepted.
 - c) For re-evaluation, no application is needed.
 - d) The application at any level shall be submitted at least 12 months prior to the preferred month and year for peer evaluation.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

7 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF AN EVALUATION TEAM

7.1 Composition of the Evaluation Team

- 7.1.1 An evaluation team shall always collectively satisfy Levels 1 to 4 of i-NAF NMFR 1 within the scope of the evaluation and may be supplemented by technical experts where required.
- 7.1.2 The evaluation team shall normally consist of a Team Leader and an adequate number of Team Members so that the team covers the scopes applied for.
- 7.1.3 The evaluation team may include a Trainee Peer Evaluator. The Trainee Peer Evaluator cannot conduct evaluation works independently and shall be closely supervised by the Team Leader or other qualified team member.
- 7.1.4 No team shall be comprised of more than one Team Member currently being qualified under the Alternative Arrangement (refer to Clause 4.3.4 of i-NAF NML 4 for details on Alternative Arrangement).
- 7.1.5 The evaluation team may include a Trainee Team Leader. The Trainee Team Leader who leads the evaluation under the supervision of a qualified Team Leader shall perform all tasks assigned to the Team Leader in this document.
- 7.1.6 If the evaluation is conducted for sub-scope extension under a main scope, the evaluation team shall include an experienced Team Leader.
- 7.1.7 A Technical Expert should not be expected to function as a peer evaluator, but only to provide specific knowledge or expertise to the evaluation team. A Technical Expert shall be closely supervised by the Team Leader or other qualified team member both during the NAB office and witness visits.

7.2 Establishing the Evaluation Team

- 7.2.1 The MLA-C shall appoint prospective individuals to participate on each evaluation (initial, extension of scope and re-evaluation) at least twelve (12) months prior to the due date or the preferred month in the case of initial or extension of scope.
- 7.2.2 Once the i-NAF Secretariat informs the Team Leader of the appointment and team composition, the Team Leader shall contact the team members to determine their availability.
- 7.2.3 When any team member is not available for some reason such as the conflict of interest or schedule and etc., the Team Leader shall advise the i-NAF Secretariat immediately.
- 7.2.4 The Team Leader shall agree the team composition and the week of peer evaluation with the NAB three(3) to six(6) months prior the due date or preferred month. Once agreed, the Team Leader shall advise the i-NAF Secretariat.
- 7.2.5 The i-NAF Secretariat shall prepare and distribute the Mandate letter to the team and the NAB.
- 7.2.6 Upon receipt of the mandate, all members of the evaluation team shall advise the Secretariat they have no conflict of interest with the applicant.
- 7.2.7 For re-evaluations, the i-NAF Secretariat shall provide the evaluation team with a copy of the previous final evaluation report and any other documents requested by the Team Leader relating to the previous evaluation at least three months before on-site evaluation.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

7.3 Travel

- 7.3.1 Peer evaluation team members and host natural accreditation bodies are to ensure that they provide sufficient time for team members to travel and recover prior to an evaluation. This should include allowing for additional accommodation to provide for a recovery day as appropriate. The natural accreditation body and team members should consider these issues and seek to reach consensus as part of the planning process.
- 7.3.2 Peer evaluation team members shall be provided with flexible economy class airline tickets for itineraries requiring up to six hours continuous flying time, and premium economy class (or business class if premium is not available) airline tickets for itineraries requiring more than six hours consecutive flying time. Any alternative arrangement should be by consensus between the accreditation body and the affected team member(s). The MLA-C shall adjudicate if the applicant and the team are unable to reach an agreement.

7.4 Confidentiality

- 7.4.1 If they have not already done so, all members of the evaluation team shall provide a signed confidentiality statement to the Secretariat. The confidentiality statement is found on Annex 1 of i-NAF NPG 6. Once signed and received by the Secretariat, the confidentiality statement covers all work undertaken on behalf of i-NAF.

8 APPOINTMENT OF AN AD HOC - REVIEW GROUP

- 8.1 Once the evaluation team is confirmed, the MLA-C shall appoint an Ad-hoc review group (AH-RG) to analyse the report in detail, and to discuss with the evaluation team any points requiring further clarification.
- 8.2 The AH-RG shall comprise at least one MLA-C member, one other MLA signatory, and one experienced peer evaluator not involved in the evaluation. The MLA-C member of each AH-RG shall act as its Convenor.
- 8.3 The composition of the AH-RG should ensure competence in the program(s) covered by the evaluation. For example: if the evaluation covers all i-NAF MLA programs, the AH-RG members should together be experienced in all programs. Otherwise, the AH-RG may get the technical support from a peer evaluator or technical expert to cover the specific programme.
- 8.4 The task of the AH-RG is to review the evaluation, planning and execution and to consider the scope, breadth and depth of the evaluation.
- 8.5 The i-NAF Secretariat shall inform the Team Leader and the members of AH-RG of the appointment and composition of the AH-RG.

9 DOCUMENT REVIEW

- 9.1 The document review shall be conducted in accordance with IAF/ILAC-A2 and this document.
- 9.2 The applicant/member being re-evaluated shall prepare a narrative report for the document review using i-NAF NMFR 5 and submit it and relevant documentation to the Team Leader at least three months before on-site evaluation.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

- 9.3 The i-NAF Secretariat Secretariat shall distribute copies of the preceding final evaluation(If there is) report to the Team Leader.
- 9.4 Each Team Member shall conduct the document review according to The Team Leader's instructions.
- 9.5 After the examination of all relevant documentation, the Team Leader shall return the updated i-NAF NMFR 5 to the applicant identifying any findings or areas requiring further clarification. This review process should be completed normally at least 30 days prior to on-site evaluation, but should be continued to establish a sufficiently compliant system prior to the evaluation.
- 9.6 The Team Leader shall prepare the evaluation plan and submit it to the applicant.

10 ON-SITE EVALUATION

- 10.1 On-site evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with IAF/ILAC A-2 and/or OIC/SMIIC 3 and this document.
- 10.2 An on-site visit consists at a minimum of an office visit of the accreditation body and witnessing of assessment of a NCAB.
- 10.3 The duration of an on-site evaluation depends on the number of scopes and sub-scopes being assessed and the length and number of the assessments to be witnessed. Typically, five days (three days for office visit and two days for witnessing) are needed for an evaluation for main scope (by as many evaluators as scopes).
- 10.4 Normally, one witness of an initial assessment or a re-assessment by a NCAB, or two surveillances are needed for each scope. In cases where the surveillance coverage for each operational area includes those elements of the respective accreditation criteria (ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17021-1, OIC/SMIIC 2 etc.), a single surveillance may be sufficient to meet this requirement.
- 10.5 The above witnessing requirements are deemed to be a minimum. More witnessing may be required at the discretion of the Team Leader. The objectives of the witness shall be achieved by evaluating the NAB's assessment which covers a substantial majority of the accreditation criteria. The Team Leader should consider the information arising during the witness to confirm that the objectives of the witness have been fully achieved, or determine whether an additional witness is required.
- 10.6 The applicant shall ensure that where an applicant operates its business in a language other than English, the applicant shall provide competent and independent translators at its own expense, to assist the evaluation team when needed.
- 10.7 The applicant shall provide the team with a resume of any proposed translator, detailing qualifications and experience, if requested.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

11 REPORTING

- 11.1 The team shall prepare a written Summary Report and Findings according to i-NAF NMFR 5. A copy of the report shall be given to the applicant at the closing meeting. The Team Leader shall give the applicant an opportunity to comment on and discuss the team's findings and resolve any misunderstandings that may have arisen. The applicant may at this stage indicate any corrective action(s) that the applicant intends to undertake. The applicant may also add its own observations. If it is obvious to the team that a follow-up visit is required, then this should also be included in the summary report. The summary shall be signed by all the team members.
- 11.2 After the visit, the evaluation Team Leader shall complete the draft evaluation report. The findings and their classification shall be consistent with IAF/ILAC A-3 Part 3, C. The draft evaluation report is submitted to the AH-RG.
- 11.3 Timeframes for submission of the draft evaluation report by the Team Leader are within 30 days for a single program evaluation, with an additional seven days for each additional program, up to a maximum of 45 days.
- 11.4 The AH-RG peer evaluator member shall respond within 30 days to the draft evaluation report, with any questions or comments on its content. Any contentious issues shall be discussed with the other members of the AH-RG.
- 11.5 The Team Leader shall amend the report as appropriate and send the amended report to the AH-RG peer evaluator member for agreement and / or clarification.
- 11.6 If the Team Leader does not agree with the AH-RG peer evaluator member's comments, the comments shall be forwarded via the i-NAF Secretariat for determination by the MLA-C.
- 11.7 Once the draft evaluation report has been agreed by the evaluation Team Leader and the AH-RG peer evaluator member, the evaluation Team Leader shall forward the report to the applicant.

12 VERIFICATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- 12.1 The applicant shall have a period of 60 days to review the report and provide a response including proposed corrective actions to the team. The Team Leader, in consultation with the other members of the team, shall review the applicant's response to the report including all proposed corrections and corrective actions. Where possible, the Team Leader shall notify the applicant within 30 days after receiving the response whether the team finds the corrections and corrective actions and the time schedule acceptable.
- 12.2 Where the team finds the applicant's response unacceptable, the applicant should normally provide a further response within two weeks after having communications with the team.
- 12.3 The level of verification required to assess the effectiveness of the corrective action taken may vary depending on the significance of the findings. For example, in certain circumstances the Team Leader may consider it appropriate to accept remote evaluation of the corrective action taken. In other circumstances, depending on the severity of the nonconformity, the Team Leader may consider it appropriate to conduct a follow-up visit for on-site verification of the corrective action taken.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

- 12.4 The Team Leader shall then forward the draft final report including close-out of NCRs and concerns, and a final recommendation to the applicant and the AH-RG.
- 12.5 If the applicant does not accept any of the findings, or refuses to take any actions required by the Team Leader, the Team Leader shall seek input from the peer evaluator member of the AH-RG. If the evaluation team, the applicant and/or the peer evaluator member of the AH-RG cannot reach an agreement, the matter shall be referred to the MLA-C for a decision. The MLA-C may choose to appoint a small group to deal with any disagreements, or to refer the matter to the i-NAF Technical Committee, as appropriate.
- 12.6 If the evaluation team has recommended a follow up visit (either before or within a year of acceptance into the MLA), the MLA-C judges this on a case-by-case basis. The follow up visit should address, as a minimum, all findings identified as requiring verification by a visit, and can include other observations on actions taken by the applicant.
- 12.7 A written i-NAF NMFR 5 report on the follow up visit shall be prepared and submitted to the MLA-C once the visit is completed. The report shall provide basic information on the visit including the date of the revisit, the name of the evaluator undertaking the revisit and the summary conclusion, as provided to the applicant at the end of the revisit on the status (closing) of the findings as recommended by the peer evaluator(s).
- 12.8 The original report's summaries of findings shall be updated based on the evidence from the follow up visit and attached to the report.
- 12.9 The report on a follow up visit shall be reviewed by the MLA-C who shall decide if it satisfactorily closes the findings. The decision of the MLA-C and the status of a follow up visit shall be reported to the MLA Group and the report shall be made available on request to MLA Group members.

13 DECISION MAKING AND ACCEPTANCE INTO THE MLA

- 13.1 Decision Making:
- 13.1.1 Upon receipt of the draft final report the members of the AH-RG shall study the report to ensure that it complies with the requirements of i-NAF peer evaluation process and make recommendations to the Convenor. The date for responses is to be 30 days from the date of receipt of the draft final report.
- 13.1.2 The report may be returned to the evaluation team for clarification if required. If the report is changed from that provided to the applicant at clause 13.4, the amended report shall be provided to the applicant for comment. The applicant shall have a period of 15 days to review the amended report and provide a response.
- 13.1.3 The Convenor of the AH-RG shall generate Ad-hoc Group Summary Report according to i-NAF NMFR 5. The final evaluation report including AH-RG Summary Report shall be submitted to the MLA-C for the endorsement via the i-NAF Secretariat.
- 13.1.4 The MLA-C shall endorse a recommendation within two weeks after receipt of final evaluation report.
- 13.1.5 The MLA-C shall not endorse a recommendation that the applicant be accepted into the MLA until all nonconformities are closed out and action plans provided in response to Concerns are to the satisfaction of the evaluation team and the AD HOC - Review Group.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

13.2 Acceptance within the MLA:

13.2.1 The i-NAF Secretariat shall submit Part A of the final evaluation report to the MLA Group with the recommendation that the applicant be accepted (or rejected) for balloting within seven days after the MLA-C endorsement of final evaluation report.

13.2.2 Acceptance of an applicant to the i-NAF MLA, or change to a Member's status, shall be based on the MLA Group Terms of Reference contained in i-NAF NPG 5. The MLA Group shall not approve admission to the MLA before all nonconformities are closed out and that action plans provided in response to Concerns are to the satisfaction of the evaluation team and AH-RG.

13.2.3 i-NAF NPG 9 shall be appropriately modified after each change and shall be signed by the i-NAF Chair. The letter shall be circulated to all i-NAF members and also posted on the i-NAF website after each update.

13.2.4 The i-NAF Secretariat shall inform the applicant of the result of balloting and forward a copy of i-NAF NMFR 8 for completion and return within seven days after the close of ballot. The feedback received shall be discussed by the MLA-C and actioned, if required.

13.3 Acceptance into the i-NAF MLA Group of an IAF Accreditation Body member that is a member of i-NAF:

13.3.1 When a member of the IAF MLA Group wishes to join the i-NAF MLA Group, the accreditation body shall submit an application to the i-NAF Secretariat as detailed in clause 7.2 of this document together with the date of its acceptance into the IAF MLA Group and its full evaluation report.

13.3.2 Provided that the applicant is already a signatory to the i-NAF MoU, has no outstanding i-NAF fees and is a signatory to the IAF MLA for the program(s) sought, the i-NAF Secretariat shall advise the i-NAF Chair of the applicant's status, and the i-NAF Chair shall approve, on behalf of the i-NAF MLA Group, admission of the applicant as a member of the i-NAF MLA Group.

13.3.3 The i-NAF Chair shall advise the i-NAF Members and the i-NAF MLA Group of the admission of the applicant to the i-NAF MLA.

13.4 Application from an IAF Accreditation Body member that is not a member of :

13.4.1 If the applicant is not a member of i-NAF, the i-NAF Secretariat shall request the body to apply for i-NAF membership. The i-NAF Secretariat shall forward to the applicant the Application for Membership in the i-NAF MoU and associated documentation, and ask the applicant to complete and return the application.

13.4.2 Once the applicant has filed the Application for Membership in the i-NAF MoU, the i-NAF Secretariat shall advise the i-NAF Chair who shall recommend to the members whether or not the applicant should be admitted as a member of i-NAF. The i-NAF Secretariat shall then conduct a ballot in accordance with the requirements of i-NAF NPG 5.

13.4.3 Following the admission of the applicant as a member of i-NAF and provided that the applicant has paid all membership fees, and that it is a signatory to the i-NAF Secretariat shall advise the i-NAF Chair that the applicant has met both requirements, and the i-NAF Chair shall approve admission of the applicant as a member of the i-NAF MLA Group.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

13.4.4 The i-NAF Chair shall advise the i-NAF Members and the i-NAF MLA Group of the admission of the applicant to the i-NAF MLA.

14 APPEALS

14.1 Appeals shall be handled in accordance with IAF/ILAC-A2 and i-NAF NPG 8.

15 MAINTENANCE OF THE MLA

15.1 Maintenance:

15.1.1 Each MLA Group member shall consistently satisfy all the requirements specified in Clause 4.1 of this document, as appropriate.

15.1.2 Each MLA Group Member agrees to comply with the MLA Group Terms of Reference contained in i-NAF NPG 5.

15.2 Re-Evaluation:

Re-evaluation shall be in accordance with IAF/ILAC-A2 and this document. Re-evaluation shall be conducted at maximum interval of four years from the last day of the previous evaluation.

15.3 Liaison Officers:

A contact person or liaison officer shall be designated by each MLA Group member to ensure a consistent channel of communication.

15.4 Notification of Change:

15.4.1 Each MLA Group member shall report any changes in its status and / or its operating practices as listed in 2.2.2 of IAF/ILAC-A2 without delay to the i-NAF Secretariat.

15.4.2 The i-NAF Secretariat shall forward the notification of change to the Team Leader who performed the last evaluation of the member, for an assessment of their significance and a recommendation on further action required (if any).

15.4.3 If the changes are determined to be significant, the MLA-C shall invite comments from all MLA Group members within 30 days of receipt of the notification.

15.4.4 If objections to the changes are received, the MLA-C shall advise the member that submitted the change of the objection, and identity of the objecting body(ies). The body(ies) concerned shall be invited to discuss the issue to resolve the matter. If the changes originally proposed are amended as a result of the discussions, the amended changes shall again be notified in accordance with 15.4.2.

15.4.5 If there remain objections to the changes, which cannot be resolved between the MLA Group members concerned, or if there is evidence of negligence by any MLA Group member in notifying changes, the MLA-C shall advise all MLA Group members of the objections or evidence of negligence.

15.4.6 The MLA-C shall make a decision as to whether any action should be taken as a result of the proposed change, and shall notify all MLA Group members of the decision.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

- 15.4.7 If the notified changes are not accepted by the MLA-C, the member of the MLA Group shall take appropriate corrective actions and notify the MLA-C of the actions taken within 30 days after notification of the non-acceptance decision.
- 15.5 Suspension/Withdrawal of Recognition:
- 15.5.1 Suspension or withdrawal of recognition shall be handled in accordance with IAF/ILAC-A2 and/or OIC/SMIIC 3.
- 15.5.2 If the signatory status of the natural accreditation body is suspended, then depending on the resolutions of the MLA Group, the natural accreditation body shall follow the instruction of the MLA Group which may include advising its natural accredited bodies of any consequences. Any new natural accreditation by the natural accreditation body during the suspension period is not covered by the i-NAF MLA and not recognized by i-NAF.
- 15.5.3 If the signatory status of the natural accreditation body is withdrawn, the natural accreditation body shall inform all applicants and accredited NCABs that the accreditation is no longer accepted under the i-NAF MLAs and their NCABs shall no longer make reference to the i-NAF MLAs.
- 15.5.4 During the course of the natural accreditation body's appeal against suspension or withdrawal of its signatory status, the signatory status shall remain in effect.
- 15.5.5 Membership in the i-NAF MLA Group shall be terminated if an natural accreditation body's membership was based on membership of another regional or IAF MLA Group and the natural accreditation body ceases to be a member of that MLA Group.
- 15.6 Voluntary suspension:
- 15.6.1 Each MLA Group Member shall inform the i-NAF Secretariat of any occasion when they no longer have any accredited natural conformity assessment bodies within an approved scope or sub-scope of the i-NAF MLA for 12 months.
- 15.6.2 Upon such notification, the MLA Group Member concerned shall be listed as voluntarily suspended from the i-NAF MLA for that scope or sub-scope.
- 15.6.3 Once the i-NAF MLA Group member accredits natural conformity assessment bodies within the scope or sub-scope covered by the voluntary suspension, they may apply for reinstatement of their i-NAF MLA signatory status for that scope or sub-scope. Applications for reinstatement will be dealt with using the same process as specified in 16.1.3.
- 15.6.4 If the reinstated i-NAF MLA Group member does not demonstrate its competence in the scope or sub-scope at the next peer evaluation they may be suspended.

16 APPLYING FOR AN EXTENSION OF SCOPE

- 16.1.1 Unless otherwise specified, a main scope extension requires a full evaluation in accordance with this document.
- 16.1.2 Sub-scope extensions under a main scope will be granted on the basis of subclause 2.2.1.1 of IAF/ILAC A2:2017 and/or OIC/SMIIC 2, whereby the MLA sub-scope extension is conducted based on self-declarations by the NAB.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

16.1.3 As a i-NAF MLA signatory, MLA signatory status may be extended in either of the following situations:

a) where i-NAF is not yet recognized for an IAF MLA sub-scope under a main-scope. In this situation:

a.1) the i-NAF MLA signatory for the same main-scope has to submit the self-declaration using IAF MLA MC 28 *MLA Declaration for sub-scope extensions (AB)* to the i-NAF Secretary;

a.2) the i-NAF MLA for the sub-scope extension is to be granted.

NOTE: *This situation applies to the following schemes:*

- *NSO-NAP 1 etc. under ISO/IEC 17065.*

16.1.4 The additional sub-scope will be evaluated at the next re-evaluation of the NAB.

16.1.5 In exceptional cases, a sub-scope extension may need peer evaluation as defined by i-NAF for the particular sub-scope.

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

**ANNEX 1
PROCESS FLOW FOR THE PEER EVALUATION**

	MLA-C	SECRETARIAT	TRAINEE TL	NAB	AH-RG	
NOMINATE AN EVALUATION TEAM	X					AT LEAST 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE
INFORM THE TL OF THE APPOINTMENT AND TEAM COMPOSITION		X				
DETERMINE THE AVAILABILITY OF TMS AGREE THE WEEK OF EVALUATION WITH TM AND NAB (*)			X			3- 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE
DISTRIBUTE THE MANDATE LETTER TO THE TEAM AND NAB.		X				
APPOINT AD-HOC REVIEW GROUP (AH-RG)	X					
INFORM TL AND AH-RG OF THE COMPOSITION OF AH-RG		X				
SUBMIT i-NAF NMFR 5 AND RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION TO THE TL (*)				X		
DISTRIBUTE COPIES OF THE PRECEDING FINAL EVALUATION REPORT TO THE TL		X				AT LEAST 3 MONTHS BEFORE ON-SITE EVALUATION
COMPLETE THE DOCUMENT REVIEW AND RETURN UPDATED i-NAF NMFR 5 TO THE NAB (*)			X			NORMALLY AT LEAST 30 DAYS BEFORE ON-SITE EVALUATION
SUBMIT THE EVALUATION PLAN TO THE NAB			X			
SUBMIT SUMMARY REPORT AND FINDINGS (i-NAF NMFR 5 PART A & ANNEX) TO THE AB AT THE CLOSING MEETING			X			
SUBMIT THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT TO TL OF AH-RG (*)			X			30 DAYS FOR A SINGLE PROGRAM PLUS 7 DAYS FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PROGRAM, UP TO 45 DAYS AFTER CLOSING MEETING
REVIEW THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT					X (TL)	30 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REPORT
AGREE THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT			X		X (TL)	
SUBMIT THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT TO THE NAB (*)			X			
PROVIDE THE RESPONSES TO THE FINDINGS TO THE TL				X		60 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT THE

**i-NAF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
A MULTILATERAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MLA) AMONG NATURAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

	MLA-C	SECRETARIAT	TRAINEE TL	NAB	AH-RG	
						REPORT
VERIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS			X			30 DAYS PLUS 2 WEEKS FOR FURTHER RESPONSE POST RECEIPT OF RESPONSES
SUBMIT THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT TO AH-RG (*)			X			
REVIEW THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT					X	30 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT
AGREE THE DRAFT FINAL EVALUATION REPORT			X		X	
PREPARE AH-RG SUMMARY REPORT AND SUBMIT THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT TO THE TL (*)					X (Convener)	
SUBMIT THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT TO THE NAB AND SECRETARIAT			X			
SUBMIT THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT TO THE MLA-C		X				
ENDORSE THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT	X					TWO WEEKS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE FINAL REPORT
SUBMIT i-NAF NMFR 5 PART A AND ANNEX TO MLA GROUP FOR VOTING		X				7 DAYS AFTER MLA-C ENDORSEMENT
INFORM THE AB OF THE RESULT OF VOTING		X				7 DAYS AFTER THE CLOSE OF VOTE
FORWARD i-NAF NMFR 8 TO THE NAB		X				

**(*) The i-NAF Secretariat shall be informed.
(secretariat@i-naf.org)**