



# **Arab Accreditation Cooperation [ARAC]**

## **Bylaws**

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## Introduction

Given the importance of the accreditation activities within the Quality Infrastructure System, and with the aim to develop the accreditation activities in the Arab Countries and to facilitate trade, the accreditation axis of the Arab Standardization Strategy has included the establishing of the Arab Accreditation Cooperation. This decision has been taken by the Council of Minister of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization [AIDMO] during its 20<sup>th</sup> session held in Damascus during the period 14-18 June 2008, under the decision number 376.

The Arab Accreditation Cooperation [ARAC] is a non-profit organization acting with independence and impartiality in decision-making.

ARAC is a cooperation of the National Accreditation Bodies in the Arab countries.

In compliance with the International requirements, ARAC members shall:

- do not work with commercial motives, and to avoid competition,
- do not work in conformity assessment activities.

### ARAC Bylaw and organizational Chart

#### Article 1: The label and the legal entity of ARAC

These Bylaws define the formal structures and rules of procedure to be followed so that ARAC's objectives as set out in the Management System Documents are fulfilled.

The headquarters of ARAC Secretariat is in AIDMO or in the headquarters of one of ARAC Accreditation Body member. The Secretariat is totally independent from the hosted Accreditation Body.

#### Article 2: Definitions

**ARAC:** Arab Accreditation Cooperation

**Accreditation:** Third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

**Accreditation Body:** Authoritative body that performs accreditation

**AIDMO :** the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization

**IAF:** The International Accreditation Forum.

**ILAC:** The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation.

**ISO:** The International Organization for Standardization

**IEC:** The International Electrotechnical Commission

**Conformity Assessment:** demonstration that **specified requirements** relating to a **product** process, system, person or body are fulfilled.

**Conformity Assessment Body:** Body that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation

**Accreditation Certificate:** Formal document or a set of documents, stating that accreditation has been granted for the defined scope

**The ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA)** is a signed agreement between the ARAC Full Members whereby the signatories recognize and accept the equivalence of the accreditation systems operated by the signing members, and also the reliability of the conformity assessment results provided by conformity assessment bodies accredited by the signing members

### **Article 3 : ARAC mission**

ARAC is the regional cooperation among accreditation bodies in the Arab region which exists to coordinate and develop the accreditation infrastructure in the Arab region with the aim to be internationally recognized. Through the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA), ARAC facilitates the acceptance of the results of conformity assessment services in one country by Regulators and the market place in another country without further examination, for the benefit of the Arab community and the global economy.

### **Article 4: ARAC objective**

- ñ To coordinate between all the accreditation activities in the regional Arab countries and help them develop and improve accreditation systems Through the achievement of recognition of ARAC with ILAC and IAF,
- ñ Recognition of all conformity assessment certificates issued by the conformity assessment bodies accredited by the Arab Accreditation Bodies through the ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA),
- ñ To increase and promote the international acceptance of certificates and reports issued by the accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies signatory with ILAC and IAF
- ñ To promote cooperation in training of peer evaluators and other personnel of accreditation bodies;
- ñ To encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of applicable documents and guidelines that have been developed by IAF and ILAC;

- ñ To facilitate collaboration, cooperation and mutual assistance among members by various means including seminars, meetings of experts and the sharing of information and experiences;
- ñ To promote international acceptance of test, calibration, inspection reports and certificates and other documents issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by signatories to the ARAC MLA;
- ñ To build up and to maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence among Full Members and to work towards further development of the ARAC multilateral recognition arrangement (MLA).

### **Article 5: ARAC role**

1. Harmonization and unification of procedures and activities of the accreditation of the conformity assessment bodies,
2. Definition and development of the Accreditation system in the Arab region, in compliance with the International requirements and takes into consideration the circumstances and needs of the Arab member states,
3. sharing of experiences in the operation of accreditation bodies, and in the establishment of mutual recognition arrangements between Arab accreditation bodies,
4. To assist the current and potential ARAC members, and provide advice on matters related to accreditation of conformity assessment bodies through its Committees,
5. Harmonization of the ARAC members procedures according to ILAC and IAF requirements,
6. Implementing the ARAC Peer evaluation Process according to ILAC, IAF and ARAC requirements with the aim to sign the ARAC MLA,
7. Cooperation with the concerned international and regional organizations, and take advantage of their services in order to develop the training programs in the field of accreditation and conformity assessment for the benefit of ARAC members.

## Article 6: ARAC membership

### Item 1: ARAC membership categories

A membership is divided into four categories and defines their rights and obligations under the ARAC implementing regulations:

- **Full member:** All third party accreditation bodies, legally established and operating in the nations or bloc of nations in the Arab region, that declare in the membership application that they are committed to operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC standards, guides and the relevant international documents of IAF and ILAC. Full Members are eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

- **Associate member:**

- Relevant organizations in the nations or bloc of nations of the Arab region intending to become accreditation bodies where no accreditation body has been established and operating;
- Other international, regional and national organizations that are interested in conformity assessment and accreditation and are not included in the Stakeholder Member category;

Associate Members are not eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

- **Stakeholder members:**

International, regional and national organizations having an interest in the work of ARAC and include bodies such as associations of Conformity assessment body associations, purchasing organisations, regulatory authorities, consumer associations and trade organisations and having a significant membership from the Arab region economies and actively present in the Arab social and economic context.

Stakeholder Members are not eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

- **Affiliate member:**

Non Arab accreditation bodies which they are committed to operate according to the requirements of ISO/IEC standards, guides and the relevant international

documents of IAF and ILAC. Affiliate Members are eligible to apply to become signatories to the ARAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement.

### **Item 2: ARAC membership conditions**

- a. Apply for ARAC membership,
- b. Participation at the General Assembly meetings and commitment to its resolutions,
- c. Giving feedback and vote on documents issued by ARAC,
- d. Maintaining confidentiality and the general objectives of ARAC, and non competition in the providing of accreditation services.
- e. To pay membership fees at a time which will be determined by the ARAC General Assembly.

### **Item 3: Suspension and withdraw of the membership in ARAC**

- a) Membership remains unless the General Assembly takes a decision of its termination or at the behest of the member to end its membership, with the explanation.
- b) The member who wants to terminate its membership, shall inform the Executive Committee two months before the termination of membership.
- c) The Executive Committee has the right to request the suspension of the membership of any ARAC member in the case of non-payment of membership fees or non-compliance with the membership conditions and requirements or any legal text issued by ARAC and presents it to the General Assembly for adoption.
- d) The Executive committee shall inform the suspended member on the decision and the reasons of this decision and determine the date of this suspension. The suspended member has the right to submit its appeal according to ARAC rules.

## **Article 7: ARAC Organizational Chart**

The ARAC organizational chart consists of the following:

1. General Assembly,
2. Executive Committee,
3. ARAC Secretariat,
4. Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) Committee,
5. Technical Committee,
6. Communication and Marketing Committee,



7. Any other committees being developed.

## **Article 8: ARAC General Assembly**

### **Item 1: Definition**

The General Assembly is the highest authority of ARAC. It is comprised of the all ARAC members.

### **Item 2:Tasks**

The General Assembly is specializes in policy-making decisions and issuing directives that help to abide the policy of ARAC and oversees the administration and enforcement of the internal regulations of ARAC in addition to the general issues related to its work.

The ARAC GA has the authority, especially:

1. Approval of the Organizational Chart of ARAC and the election of ARAC Chair, Vice Chair and Committees Chairs,
2. Consider the themes and issues and recommendations presented in the field of accreditation to take the appropriate decision (Proficiency Testing),
3. To approve the fees, financial statements, and annual budget of ARAC,
4. Approval of formation of committee, including technical and consulting committees, as needed, and election of their chair and approve the Terms of Reference of these committees and their Work Plans,
5. Approval of the revision on the ARAC bylaws,
6. Validation of the ARAC activities reports and agreements to be concluded,
7. Delegate any of its functions and terms of reference of the General Assembly contained in this article to the Executive Committee,
8. Approval of the ARAC regulations and Technical Procedures,
9. Approval of the draft resolutions and recommendations of all ARAC committees.

### **Item 3: ARAC GA meetings**

1. Shall meet normally once a year and can meet extraordinarily, in the event of exceptional circumstances, as requested by the ARAC Chair or by a request of third of the votes ARAC members;
2. Shall have quorum and begin its meeting when two thirds of its full members is present more than half of its full and associate members, including the Chair and vice Chair,
3. To invite persons or organizations to attend and observe all or part of the ARAC General Assembly or an Executive Committee meeting that does not have a right to vote,
4. The results of the meetings of the General Assembly shall be issued in the form of resolutions,
5. If there is a need for a decision or to submit a document for approval by the ARAC members between General Assembly meetings, the Secretariat will follow the corresponding procedure for voting out of session.

### **Item 4: Voting**

ARAC full and associate members have the right of voting On the basis of one vote per member. Decisions shall be issued by a majority of two-thirds of the members present.

## **Article 9: ARAC Executive Committee**

### **Item 1: Composition**

**ARAC Executive Committee Chair:** ARAC Chair.

**ARAC Executive Committee members:**

1. ARAC Vice Chair,
2. ARAC Committees Chairs from ARAC full members,
3. One member from ARAC associate members, who will be elected by their representatives, and maximum two members from ARAC full members, elected by the ARAC General Assembly, for a two-year term renewable one time while ensuring balanced representation of members and benefit from the expertise available at the organizational and technical level.

ARAC Executive committee Chair can invite persons or organizations to attend and observe all or part of the ARAC Executive Committee meeting that does not have a right to vote.

**Item 2: Tasks**

1. To monitor the fulfillment of ARAC's objectives and the execution of its General Assembly resolutions;
2. Follow up the implementation of the ARAC roles and activities according to this Bylaw and ARAC General Assembly resolutions;
3. To establish the formation, the Terms of Reference, and monitor the operation of ARAC committees and subcommittees as necessary, to ensure their proper coordination;
4. To adapt the procedures and policies of ARAC with the international practices, make the necessary changes, and approve it from the General Assembly;
5. Study the ARAC membership applications and brought it to the General Assembly for decision, and to provide recommendations and suggestions for the policy and operation of ARAC;
6. To cooperate and develop relations with other relevant bodies in the field of conformity assessment and other relevant Arab, regional, and international organizations;
7. Development of ARAC relations with the relevant Arab, Regional and International organizations;
8. Submit the General Assembly annual reports on the activities and achievements of ARAC and the technical committees;
9. Any other works assigned by the General Assembly.

**Item 3 : Meetings**

1. Meet normally at least twice a year, and exceptionally as is requested by the Chair or the majority of members;
2. The quorum will be legal with the presence of the majority of members and the Chair.

**Item 4: Voting**

The voting is on the basis of one vote for each member, and the decisions made by a majority of those present, in the case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the Committee have the casting vote.

## **Article 10: ARAC Chair**

### **Item 1: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ARAC**

The ARAC Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected, from ARAC full members, by the General Assembly for a two-year term and may be reelected for a second consecutive term.

### **Item 2: Tasks of ARAC Chair**

It is the responsibility of the Chair:

1. To chair the ARAC General Assembly and Executive Committee and follow up the implementation of all actions approved by the General Assembly and Executive committee,
2. To represent ARAC at Arab, regional, and international organizations of interest,
3. To follow up the preparation of ARAC regulations and Technical Guidelines before the approval by the General Assembly,
4. To negotiate and sign agreements approved by the ARAC General Assembly ,
5. Any other tasks entrusted to him/her by the ARAC General Assembly.

### **Item 2: Tasks of ARAC Chair**

It is the responsibility of the Vice Chair:

1. To assist the Chair in fulfilling his/her duties;
2. To substitute for the Chair in his/her absence.

## **Article 11: ARAC Secretariat**

### **Item 1: Definition:**

ARAC Secretariat is based in the permanent headquarters of AIDMO, or at the headquarters of the host Accreditation Body.

### **Item 2: Tasks of the ARAC Secretariat**

It is the main responsibility of the ARAC Secretariat :

1. To do the daily business of ARAC;
2. To coordinate with ARAC members and follow up the implementation regarding the actions approved by the ARAC General Assembly and Executive Committee and to;
3. To maintain a system for documents and records control;
4. To prepare the ARAC General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings and their minutes;

5. To represent ARAC to the judicial and legal authorities;
6. Any other tasks entrusted by the ARAC General Assembly.

## **Article 12: ARAC Meetings**

ARAC Committees meetings held in the country of the Secretariat Headquarters and can be held in one of ARAC full members or associate members country upon request.

## **Article 13: Regulations**

The ARAC Executive Committee prepare one or more Technical Regulations related to the implementation of this Bylaws which to be approved by the ARAC General Assembly.

## **Article 14: ARAC Budget**

### **Item 1: Financial Ressources**

ARAC have a budget within the AIDMO budget with its independent clause. The resources of this budget consist of membership fees and unconditional aid or grants and other resources approved by the General Assembly which shall not affect the independence and impartiality of ARAC.

### **Item 2: The financial year and the final accounts**

- The ARAC fiscal year begins on January 1, ending December 31 of each calendar year;
- The Executive Committee prepares and presents the draft budget and final accounts to the ARAC General Assembly for approval.

## **Article 15: Dissolution of ARAC**

The General Assembly may determine the dissolution of ARAC only if it has been specifically convened for this purpose and if it is approved by an affirmative vote with unanimous by all the members. ARAC will continue to perform its work until the start of its dissolution.

## **Article 16: General provisions**

1. This Bylaw is applied from the date of its approval during the first meeting of the ARAC General Assembly ;
2. This Bylaw is modified according to the second item of Article Seven and ARAC Document Control Procedure, upon request of one of ARAC full members or ARAC Chair or Committee Chairs and with the approval of two-thirds of the full members of the ARAC General Assembly .ARAC Chair sends to ARAC full members the modifications at least one month before the ARAC General Assembly meeting,
3. The resolutions issued by the Executive Committee and other committees shall be endorsed by the General Assembly, with the exception of MLA Committee resolutions, which are final and not subject to further review,
4. If there is a need for a decision or to submit a document for approval by the ARAC members between General Assembly meetings, the Secretariat will follow the corresponding procedure for voting out of session.