IAAC Quality Manual

CLASSIFICATION

This document is classified as an IAAC Administrative Document.

AUTHORIZATION

Issue Nº:	06
Prepared by:	Executive Committee
Date:	June 2022
Revision Nº:	01
Approved by:	Executive Committee
Issue Date:	August 19, 2022
Application Date:	Immediate
Document number:	IAAC AD 003/22
Name for Inquiries:	IAAC Secretariat
Contact Phone:	+52 (55) 9148-4300
e-mail:	secretariat@iaac.org.mx

AVAILABILITY

Copies of this document in English and Spanish are available from the IAAC Secretariat and the IAAC website.

COPYRIGHT

Original: Spanish

IAAC Quality Manual

Content

TOPIC	Page

IAAC Quality Manual

The current document, IAAC AD 003 "IAAC Quality Manual", provides the current operational basis of the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and describes the management system requirements to guarantee the fulfillment of its objectives.

1. What is IAAC?

The Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) is an association of accreditation bodies and other organizations interested in conformity assessment in the Americas.

IAAC was created in 1996, in Montevideo, Uruguay, by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, and legally established in 2001 as a civil association according to the laws of Mexico.

IAAC is a nonprofit organization operating on the basis of cooperation among its members and stakeholders, promoting it under the principles of independence, transparency, responsibility, commitment and professional ethics. IAAC's resources come from membership fees, voluntary donations by its members and contributions of projects by relevant organizations. IAAC's basic documents are the Memorandum of Understanding and the Bylaws.

IAAC is recognized by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

IAAC works in close cooperation with regional accreditation organizations including Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation, (APAC), European Accreditation Cooperation (EA), Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC), African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC), and Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) and works in close cooperation with other related organizations.

2. Memorandum of Understanding
IAAC communicates through the Memorandum of Understanding the fundamental elements of its origin, constitution and function, according to what is established in the document IAAC AD 001 "Memorandum of Understanding", currently in force.

3. IAAC Articles of Incorporation

Through its Articles of Incorporation, the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) makes its organization activity formal and legal in line with the applicable laws, as stated in the document IAAC AD 004 "IAAC Articles of Incorporation", currently in force.

4. Bylaws

Through its Bylaws, IAAC describes the formal structures and rules aimed at reaching the objectives of the MOU, as stated in the document IAAC AD 002 "IAAC Bylaws", currently in force.

5. Vision

To be recognized as an agile international driver of Multilateral Recognition Arrangements that bolster a superior Quality Infrastructure in the Americas through partnerships and sustainable programs with governments, regulators, stakeholders and industry that improves confidence in accredited conformity assessments which catalyze economic growth and sustainable development.

6. Mission.

According to its Bylaws, IAAC's mission is to promote cooperation between accreditation bodies and stakeholders in America, focused on the development of the structures of conformity assessment to achieve the improvement of products, processes and services, and:

a) To facilitate trade between the nations of America through a system of Conformity Assessment; Bodies

b) Develop and maintain Multilateral Recognition Agreements (MLAs) between IAAC Member Bodies ;

c) To maintain its recognition as Regional Cooperation by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) or the International organization(s) of accreditation that may replace them;

d) To promote acceptance of accreditations granted by accreditation body members, based on equivalence of the operation of their accreditation systems and their respective programs within the framework of international accreditation, and in cooperation with other regional groups of accreditation bodies as well as promote international acceptance of certificates and reports issued by Conformity Assessment; Bodies duly accredited, and

e) Develop, maintain and manage a program for the transfer of experience and technical information, to exchange information, regional expert visits and similar activities to support new accreditation programs, the ones that are developed and established.

7. Quality Policy

IAAC is committed to:

- Ensure the competence of accredited conformity assessment bodies within the IAAC accreditation body community;

- Provide a service of excellence to fulfill the needs of the accreditation bodies of conformity assessment bodies of the region, and other interested parties;

- Promote the acceptance of services of IAAC recognized accreditation bodies of conformity assessment bodies in order to facilitate trade;

- Coordinate and maintain the IAAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangements (MLAs) of the countries' accreditation systems in the Americas.

- Maintain and extend Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangements (MLAs) with IAF and ILAC.

8. Goals

According to its Bylaws, the IAAC goals are:

• To develop, maintain, improve and expand the scopes of the IAAC Multilateral Recognition Agreements;

• To maintain international recognition as a Regional Cooperation by IAF and ILAC;

• To increase the acceptance of certificates and reports issued by accredited conformity assessment bodies through established Multilateral Recognition Agreements;

• To facilitate collaboration, cooperation and mutual assistance among members by means of training activities, meetings of experts and sharing of information and experiences;
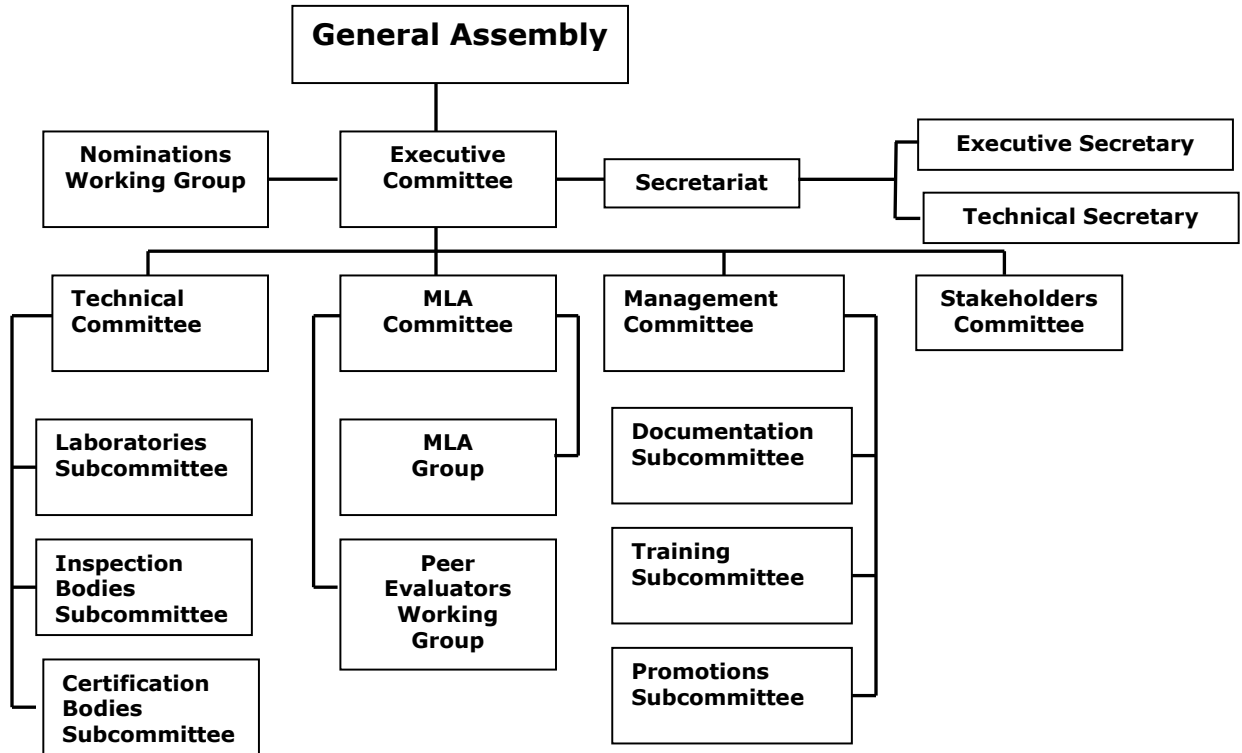
• To assist the current and potential IAAC members, and provide advice on matters related to accreditation of conformity assessment bodies;

• To harmonize the criteria for the operation of member accreditation bodies, based on ISO/IEC international standards and guides and IAF and ILAC documents;

• To facilitate the Exchange of information between accreditation body members of IAAC and members of IAF and ILAC;

• To promote cooperation in training of peer evaluators and other personnel of accreditation bodies;

• To encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of standards, guidelines and application documents that have been developed by IAF and ILAC;

• To encourage and support the development of accreditation bodies in the Americas;

• To work with other regional bodies such as Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the Inter American Metrology System (SIM), the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), the Arab Accreditation Cooperation, (AFRAC), and the Southern African Development Community in Accreditation, (ARAC), the African Accreditation Cooperation, (AFRAC), the African Accreditation Cooperation, (SADCA), as well as technical bodies from different sub regional blocs; and

• To seek financial and all types of support for IAAC members from regional and international organizations to develop training and assessment programs in the areas of accreditation and conformity assessment.

9   Strategic Plan

IAAC relies on a strategic plan with defines priorities and formalizes objectives, goals and general actions to be communicated to all organizational levels, as stated in the document IAAC AD 006 "IAAC Strategic Plan", currently in force.

10   Organizational Structure

The Organizational Structure of IAAC includes a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, Committees, Subcommittees and Working Groups, as shown in the figure below:

General Assembly

Nominations Working Group — Executive Committee — Secretariat — Executive Secretary / Technical Secretary

Technical Committee | MLA Committee | Management Committee | Stakeholders Committee

Laboratories Subcommittee | MLA Group | Documentation Subcommittee

Inspection Bodies Subcommittee | Peer Evaluators Working Group | Training Subcommittee

Certification Bodies Subcommittee | | Promotions Subcommittee

11   Terms of Reference

As an organization based on the continuous effort of organizations and persons, IAAC coordinates its activities through Committees and Subcommittees, their terms of reference define their scope of work, composition, and other aspects of their operation. The terms of reference established by IAAC are:

• Executive Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 020, currently in force.)

• MLA Committee and MLA Group terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 021, currently in force.)

• Technical Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 022, currently in force.)

• Management Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 023, currently in force.)

• Stakeholders' Committee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 030, currently in force.)

• Laboratories Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 024, currently in force.)

• Inspection Bodies Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 025, currently in force.)

• Certification Bodies Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 026, currently in force.)

• Documentation Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 027, currently in force.)

• Promotion Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 028, currently in force.)

• Training Subcommittee terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 029, currently in force.)

• Nominations Group terms of reference (see document IAAC AD 041, currently in force.)

12. IAAC Members' General Assembly

Annually IAAC holds a General Assembly inviting all IAAC members to receive an update of all relevant events and actions undertaken in the previous year, to hold discussions and to agree on the Cooperation's future work. The coordination and realization of this General Assembly is described in the current version of IAAC AD 002 "IAAC Bylaws".

13. Policies and Procedures Documents

All IAAC policies and procedures documents are published in the IAAC Documents Master List which is on the IAAC Website www.iaac.org.mx.

14. Management Review

The management review is essential to ensure the proper operation and development of the strategic plan, the achievement of IAAC goals and the proper operation and improvement of IAAC Management System. The management review is carried out by the IAAC Executive Committee according to the current document IAAC PR 011 "Procedure for Management Review and Internal Audits".

15. Internal Audit

IAAC performs systematic internal audits of its management system, processes and results according to the current document IAAC PR 011 "Procedure for Management Review and Internal Audits", which establishes requirements to present, perform and check the results of corrective actions resulting from internal audits. This way IAAC verifies their operation, implementation and effectiveness, which allows for optimization and improvement of its operation.

16. Document control

In the document IAAC PR 001 "Procedure to draft and control IAAC documents, and to manage IAAC records", currently in force, IAAC has established a procedure for the effective control of its management system documents in order to ensure its proper drafting, identification, classification, revision, voting, approval, validity and distribution. It also describes the procedure for the adoption by IAAC of international documents, and the translation into other languages of certain documents.

17. Record control

IAAC demonstrates conformity with its management system requirements and commitments through documents issued as evidence of its activity, which are IAAC records. Records are controlled as described in the document IAAC PR 001 "Procedure to draft and control IAAC documents, and to manage IAAC records", currently in force.

18. Complaints and appeals

The complaints and appeals filed to IAAC are handled according to the document IAAC PR 005 "Procedure for handling complaints and appeals", currently in force, which ensures that the parties involved state their views, and a resolution is issued in accordance with the relevant IAAC rules and requirements.

19. Corrective and preventive actions

The steps to take corrective and preventive actions resulting from internal audits, management reviews, and/or complaints and appeals are described in the current procedures established by IAAC to this effect and established in this Quality Manual.

If any activities lead to corrective and preventive actions resulting from sources other than the above, the IAAC Executive Secretary will record them and submit them to the IAAC Chair to decide who will be appointed to monitor said actions until their closure.

20. Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA)

The "Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA)" is the main tool to develop and meet IAAC goals. In this regard, the document IAAC MD 001 "IAAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement", currently in force, describes the elements of a Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement, in order to ensure its correct and appropriate implementation.

This MLA is based on results from evaluations carried out according to procedure IAAC MD 002 "Policies and procedures for a Multilateral Recognition Agreement among Accreditation Bodies", currently in force.

IAAC makes the application documents available to all its members, see document IAAC FM 001 "IAAC MLA Application Form", currently in force.

21. Notice of changes

Signatories to the IAAC MLA shall notify the IAAC Executive Secretary and the MLA Group Chair as soon as possible of any significant changes in the status and/or operational practices of its system, such as a change of name or legal status; details of new agreements; revision, suspension or termination of any agreement; major changes in its key staff and/or organizational structure; major operational changes, especially in the mechanisms to ensure the proper functioning of the organization; details about the use of subcontracted evaluations; or any change to be reviewed which may have an impact on the accreditation bodies signatories of the IAAC MLA in order to take relevant action.

22. Selection, training, qualification and monitoring the performance of peer evaluators

In order to include a new member into the MLA, IAAC makes sure of counting on a staff with the adequate qualification, experience and competence to carry out the assessment process. The application and requirements to be an IAAC peer evaluator (Document IAAC FM 006 "IAAC Peer evaluator curriculum vitae form", currently in force) make it possible to rely on such staff and establish proper qualification and training processes. This process to select, train, qualify and monitor peer evaluators is established in the following documents: IAAC MD 002 "Policies and procedures for a Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement among Accreditation Bodies" and IAAC PR 004 "Procedure for selection, training, qualification and monitoring the performance of IAAC peer evaluators", both currently in force.

23. IAAC confidentiality and impartiality in the evaluation process

Through the declaration of confidentiality and impartiality, IAAC communicates and establishes the rules and commitments of its peer evaluators to protect the confidential nature of the information about the evaluation process and be impartial at all times. This declaration is formally stated and described in the document IAAC FM 011 "IAAC Declaration of confidentiality and impartiality", currently in force. In this connection, IAAC guarantees the fulfillment of the established regulations through the document IAAC PR 004 "Procedure for Selection, Training, Qualification and Monitoring the Performance of IAAC Peer Evaluators", currently in force.

24. Use of the IAAC logo

IAAC has established regulations for the correct use of the IAAC logo (see document IAAC PR 023 "Procedure for the use of the IAAC logo and authority to speak on behalf of IAAC", currently in force).

25. IAAC Website

The web site of IAAC is at www.iaac.org.mx, which includes an open public section and a members' only section. The latter is available to all IAAC members. Other organizations and IAAC stakeholders have access to the website as described below.

The member appointed by each organization is given a personal username and password to enter the website. Every user is responsible for the use and control of the password and the confidential nature of the information they access.

Usernames and passwords are assigned to representatives of other organizations and stakeholders to access specific topics for a limited amount of time. These representatives are responsible for the use and control of their passwords and the confidential nature of the information they access.

The IAAC website is managed by the IAAC Executive Secretariat, who is responsible for assigning usernames and passwords to enter the website. The contents and texts, published on the website under the supervision of the IAAC Executive Secretariat, are validated beforehand, as appropriate, by the General Assembly, a committee, or a subcommittee.

Any necessary or proposed change in the information and structure of the website must be previously authorized, as appropriate, by the General Assembly, a Committee, a Subcommittee or a Working Group and coordinated by the IAAC Executive Secretariat. Any IAAC member, committee or stakeholder may request a change in the content of the website.

IAAC uses a website provider in accordance with the required safety, privacy and confidentiality policies and rules established by IAAC that guarantees its proper and continuous operation.