

Policy on cross frontier accreditation

1. Introduction:

In order to prevent competition among accreditation bodies and to strengthen meeting WTO/TBT objectives of facilitating international trade by removing technical barriers to trade through mutual recognition between SLAB and other accreditation bodies, SLAB accepts that there should be necessary policy for SLAB to follow when conducting conformity assessment nationally or abroad.

2. Scope:

This policy provides guidelines for cross frontier accreditation to help maintain an equivalent accreditation service and to avoid duplication of work done of other accreditation bodies.

3. Responsibility:

Director/ Additional Director/ Technical Managers/ Authorized officers

4. Reference:

ILAC G21: 2012- Cross Frontier Accreditation – Principles for avoiding duplication

IAF MD 12: 2016- Accreditation Assessment of Conformity Assessment Bodies with activities in Multiple Countries

IAF MD 23: 2018- Control of entities operating on behalf of accredited management systems certification bodies

5. Procedure:

There are situations where a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) will seek more than one accreditation or a “foreign” accreditation. The International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) strongly advise CABs to obtain local accreditation. However, there are many reasons why a CAB may seek accreditation from bodies outside of their own country instead of or as well as the local accreditation. These reasons include:

5.1.1 The local Accreditation Body (AB) does not offer the full scope of accreditation;

5.1.2 The local AB is not a signatory to the ILAC/IAF MRA/MLA;

5.1.3 There is no local AB in the country;

5.1.4 The CABs’ preferences are based on commercial or other business reasons;

5.1.5 The CABs’ customers demand a specific accreditation and will not be persuaded to accept an equivalent;

5.1.6 The CAB is part of a group of CABs with a single owner who wants all the CABs to offer the same accredited certificate; and

5.1.7 Regulatory requirements within the country require accreditation by SLAB.

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5.2 If SLAB is requested to provide accreditation to a CAB outside Sri Lanka, the following will be considered by SLAB before acceptance:

5.2.1 Enquire if the applicant is aware of the local AB ILAC/IAF MRA/MLA signatory and whether local AB is held;

5.2.2 Suggest that the accreditation could be done in a more economical manner if the local AB ILAC/IAF MRA/MLA signatory performs the accreditation;

5.2.3 Point out the equivalence of the local accreditation demonstrated through the ILAC/IAF MRA/MLA.

5.3 Should an applicant CAB choose SLAB instead of the local AB then SLAB shall:

5.3.1 Inform the local AB that SLAB will be undertaking the work and explain the circumstances after obtaining permission for this from the applicant. Should the applicant CAB refuse to allow SLAB to reveal this information then SLAB shall not continue with the process. Only in those circumstances where the applicant has a very acceptable reason for not informing the local AB, or the local AB refuses to cooperate, SLAB shall continue with the accreditation process.

5.3.2 SLAB shall wherever possible utilize the local ILAC/IAF signatory AB to provide assessment team personnel wherever possible, and where not possible SLAB shall seek from the local AB any relevant feedback about the CAB concerned.

5.3.3 When SLAB decides to provide accreditation services outside Sri Lanka, SLAB shall ensure that appropriate assessors are used, taking into account factors such as language, local laws and regulations, culture, etc., as well as technical competence requirements. SLAB should consult the local accreditation body taking into consideration any relevant accreditation requirements that the local accreditation body has set to suit the local conditions.

5.3.4 SLAB would also propose a joint assessment with the ILAC/IAF signatory/not yet signatory AB.

5.3.5 If it is not possible to include personnel from the local accreditation body on the assessment team, cooperation with the local accreditation body should be extended to invite the local accreditation body to observe the assessment, subject to acceptance by the applicant.

5.3.6 If there is an ILAC/IAF member AB in the country of the applicant that is not yet an ILAC/IAF signatory for the scope, SLAB will enquire whether the applicant CAB would be prepared to have any relevant local AB informed of the application with the option of:

- Observing the assessment for experience;
- Providing a team member or members to the AB assessment team; or
- Performing a joint assessment with the objective of dual accreditation.

5.3.7 SLAB shall obtain permission from the CAB to share information with the local AB in those instances where there is to be some form of cooperation.

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SLAB, where possible, will take into consideration the results of previous assessments done by the local AB in the development of the assessment program for the CAB.

Note: The following sections 6, 7 and 8 are only applicable to certification bodies.

6. Data Collection

6.1 The SLAB shall require its accredited CAB's to identify and submit:

- i) Countries into which accredited certificates are issued and the number of certificates issued in each country by the CAB accredited by SLAB;
- ii) Countries in which the CAB operates from a fixed office location that performs any certification activities;
- iii) Countries in which the CAB has remote personnel that perform any certification activities;
- iv) Which fixed office locations are responsible for performing and/or managing key activities as defined in SLAB Rules and Procedures: CB-RG(P)-02, or from where remote personnel performing key activities are managed; and
- v) The CAB's arrangements for managing all activities that are performed from a foreign fixed office location or by remote personnel

6.2 The purpose of this list is to allow SLAB to plan assessment program for each of the accredited CABs with up to date information on the geographical spread of the CABs.

7. Assessment Programme

The SLAB shall have an assessment program, covering the current accreditation period that enables it to confirm the CAB's conformity with the requirements of the relevant conformity assessment standard(s), within the CAB's scope of accreditation, irrespective of where certification activities are performed.

The program shall be developed to identify the activities and key activities to be assessed and the countries where these are performed and/or managed, taking account of the following:

8. Critical locations

8.1 SLAB requires all accredited CABs to identify all those physical locations where activities are controlled or conducted that determine or demonstrate the effectiveness of the CAB's performance in particular:

8.1.1 The processes for initial qualification, training and ongoing monitoring of auditors and assessment personnel records; or

8.1.2 The application review, assignment of audit personnel and/or review of the final report; or

8.1.3 The certification decision based on the final review of the audit report.

8.2 The locations described in 7.1 are referred to as "Critical Locations".

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9. Assessment of critical locations

9.1 SLAB assessment plan shall include office assessments and witness assessments to be conducted, at the main office and critical locations; in a manner that in each assessment it shall include the main office and 1/3 of critical locations. Whenever a new critical location has applied, that critical location should also be witnessed.

10. Control of entities operating on behalf of accredited management systems certification bodies

10.1 This shall be applicable for entities, performing and/or managing management system certification activities, on behalf of certification bodies (CBs) holding SLAB accreditation, which are not wholly or partly owned or employed by the CB. The entities may or may not be located in the same country as the CB head office and may be a representative, agency, franchisee or sales office of the CB or any entity which has a contractual relationship with the CB for performing certification activities.

10.2 Once notified by the CB, SLAB shall monitor such entities as per Clause 2 of IAF MD 23: 2018

11. Cooperation with foreign accreditation bodies

11.1 SLAB shall provide its fullest cooperation for foreign accreditation bodies for the fulfillment of the IAF MD 23 and expects the same from them.

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