

**2019**

# **SADCA POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR A MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA) AMONG ACCREDITATION BODIES**

## **SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COOPERATION IN ACCREDITATION**

*The document defines the policies and procedures of SADCA to establish, maintain and extend an MRA among accreditation bodies that are signatories to the SADCA MRA.*

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose

This document provides the Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) with general requirements and procedures for evaluating single and multi-economy Accreditation Bodies (ABs) for the purpose of qualifying them to sign applicable Arrangement(s).

### 1.2 Scope

This document identifies requirements and procedures for evaluation by SADCA of a single or multi-economy accreditation body. Section 3 includes a flowchart with harmonized procedures. There are six annexes to describe in more detail the major steps of the process.

*Note: This document has been based on IAF/ILAC A2.*

### 1.3 Definitions

For the purpose of this document the following definitions apply:

- 1.3.1 *Accreditation Body (single or multi economy AB):* An organization that operates an accreditation system for one or more types of conformity assessment bodies.
- 1.3.2 *Accreditation scheme:* rules and procedures specified in a standard or normative document included in SADCA Arrangements that address the process for the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies (Level 3).
- 1.3.3 *Arrangement:* The SADCA Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).
- 1.3.4 *Arrangement Group:* All signatories to the SADCA MRA Arrangement.
- 1.3.5 *Decision Making Group:* A body that decides on the status of membership of an Arrangement (i.e. the SADCA MRA Council).
- 1.3.6 *Deputy Team Leader (DTL):* A person assigned to assist the TL in planning, preparing and managing the evaluation.
- 1.3.7 *Evaluation Team Leader (TL):* A person responsible for leading a team in the evaluation of an accreditation body.
- 1.3.8 *Evaluation Team Member (TM):* A person serving on a team in the evaluation of an accreditation body.
- 1.3.9 *MRA Committee:* The committee responsible for planning and managing the implementation and maintenance of SADCA's Mutual Recognition Arrangement. This Committee includes the MRA Council and may also include non-signatory members.
- 1.3.10 *MRA Council:* All signatories to the SADCA Arrangement. The MRA Council decides on and manages membership of the SADCA Arrangement.



- 1.3.11 *Peer Evaluation*: A structured process of evaluation of an accreditation body by representatives of accreditation bodies.
- 1.3.12 *Proficiency Testing Activity*: All those activities of comparisons of tests, calibrations & inspections between laboratories/inspection bodies and used by accreditation bodies to assess performance, including proficiency tests (refer to ISO/IEC 17043) interlaboratory comparisons and measurement audits conducted by Regional Groups, accreditation bodies, commercial organizations, or other providers (see ILAC P9).
- 1.3.13 *Standard*: A standard or other normative documents related to accreditation and conformity assessment bodies.
- 1.3.14 *Signatory*: A Member of SADCA who has signed the SADCA Mutual Recognition Arrangement.
- 1.3.15 *Witnessing*: Observation of an AB carrying out assessment at the premises of the conformity assessment body (CAB) and evaluating the AB's management system and records by an evaluation team. (It may also include observing the AB's staff preparing for an assessment and dealing with assessment reports.)

## SECTION 2: REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ACCREDITATION BODY

### 2.1 Requirements

- 2.1.1 An accreditation body shall comply with the provisions of ISO/IEC 17011 requirements and mandatory documents in IAF and ILAC where applicable.
- 2.1.2 An accreditation body shall also comply with relevant supplementary requirements (see Clause 2.2) and any applicable SADCA requirements.

### 2.2 Supplementary requirements

- 2.2.1 An accreditation body shall:
  - 2.2.1.1 Have demonstrated experience in the assessment of its accredited conformity assessment bodies (CAB) and have carried out and granted at least one accreditation that is valid at the time of the evaluation in each of the scopes of the Arrangement for which it applies;

For Certification additional level 4 and/or 5 extensions under the same level 3 scope will be granted on the basis of AB self-declaration that the level 4/5 scope has been introduced and relevant requirements as defined by SADCA and IAF have been met. The additional level 4 and/or 5 scope will be evaluated at the next peer evaluation. In exceptional cases, inclusion of a level 4/5 scope may need evaluation as specifically defined by SADCA for the particular level 4/5 scope.

*Note: For definitions of Levels, please refer to IAF PR 4 or ILAC R6, as applicable.*



- 2.2.1.2 Have demonstrated experience in operating an accreditation body and have access to technical expertise in all aspects of its accreditation activities. Where the number of accredited CABs is less than 4 at the time of evaluation, the need for a follow-up evaluation before the normal 4-year period shall be considered by the MRA Council.
- 2.2.1.3 Specify the acceptable routes for traceability, and assess its implementation by CABs (applicant and signatory ABs: see ILAC P10);
- 2.2.1.4 Ensure that it meets the relevant requirements for proficiency testing activity (applicant and signatory ABs: see ILAC P9);
- 2.2.1.5 Abide by the requirements and obligations of the applicable regional and international Arrangement(s);
- 2.2.1.6 Have evidence of promoting the Arrangement with major stakeholders;
- 2.2.1.7 Contribute its fair share of personnel resources for carrying out peer evaluations at the regional and/or global level, i.e. each signatory shall provide SADCA with at least one peer evaluator for each program for which it is a signatory; and
- 2.2.1.8 Have implemented a cross frontier accreditation policy in accordance with the relevant IAF document(s) (for IAF signatories) or taking into account ILAC Guide 21 (for ILAC signatories).

## 2.2.2 Notification of change

Each accreditation body signatory to the SADCA Arrangement shall report any significant changes in its status and/or its operating practices (e.g. as listed below) including the impact of these changes without delay to the SADCA Secretariat.

For possible consequences associated with changes see Annex 6.

- Legal status;
- Senior accreditation program personnel;
- Contact person or liaison officer for the Arrangement;
- Accreditation criteria and procedures for its accreditation programs, related to the Arrangement;
- Office address (and postal address, if different), including head office and any offices;
- Relationship with Government;
- Other changes that significantly affect the competence or credibility of the accreditation process.

## 2.2.3 Confidentiality

- 2.2.3.1 All oral and written information received about the AB through the operation of SADCA relating to pre-evaluations, evaluations, re-evaluations, appeals and complaints (except that information which is already publicly accessible) shall be treated confidentially by all parties and persons concerned. This includes information relating to applicants and/or signatories of the Arrangement. All individuals having access to confidential



information shall provide a signed *Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality form* to the SADCA secretariat before being given access.

2.2.3.2 The AB under evaluation and team leader shall agree about how to treat the documents it has provided. This may require the team members to:

- return all documents to the AB; or
- destroy the documentation, when it is determined there is no further need to maintain the documents.

2.2.3.3 Evaluators are required to confirm with the SADCA secretariat that the AB's documentation has been appropriately returned or destroyed.

2.2.3.4. SADCA shall remain the owner of the evaluation report. The report shall not be made publicly available except as detailed in Annex 7.

## **2.3 Conditions for application**

2.3.1 The AB agrees to pay for the hotel costs, meals and all travel costs of the evaluation team.

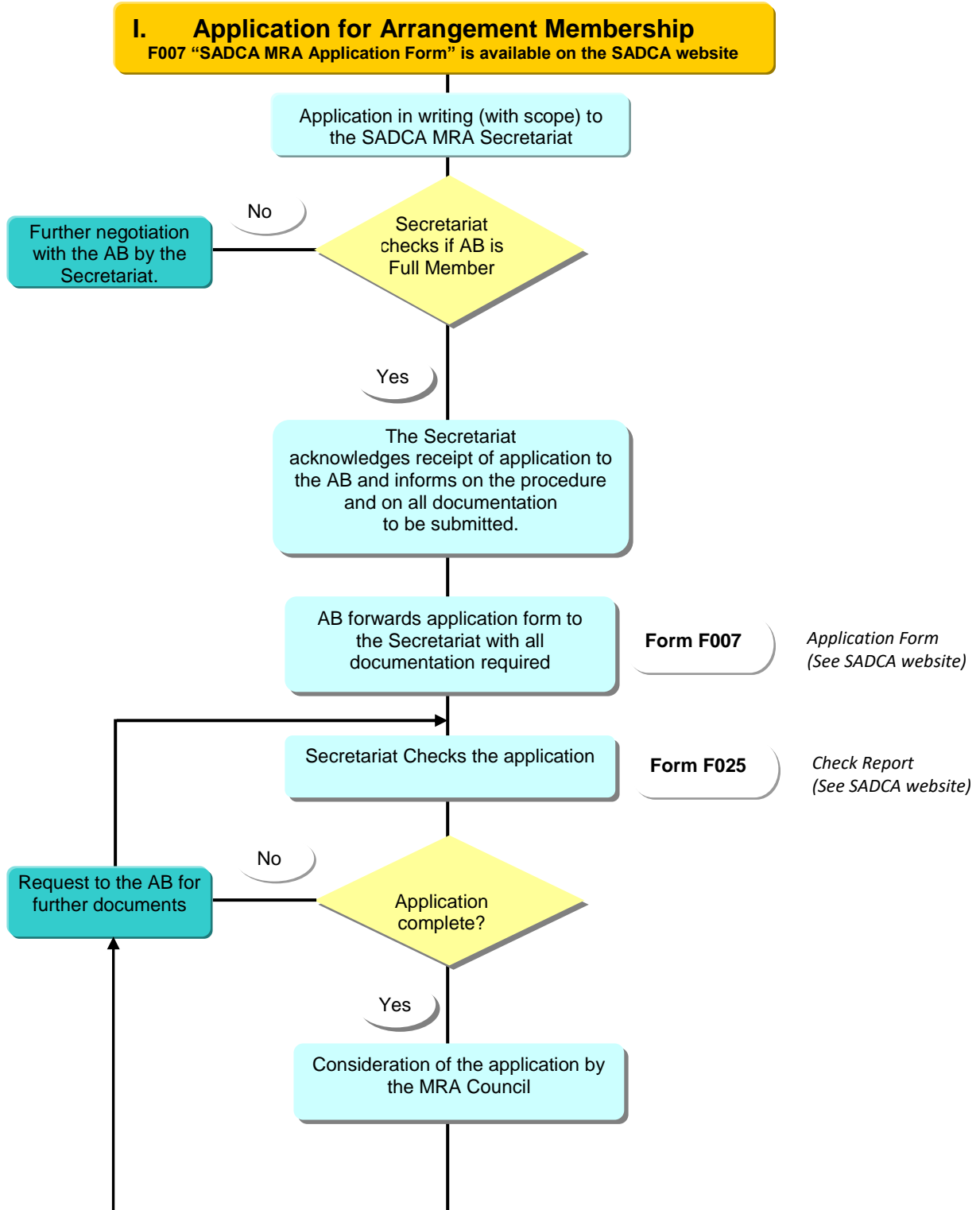
2.3.2 Travel shall be done in economy class unless the applicant agrees to pay business class. If the AB does not agree, then economy travel is mandated unless the evaluators wish to pay for their own airlines upgrades.

2.3.3 Observers/trainees pay all of their own costs.

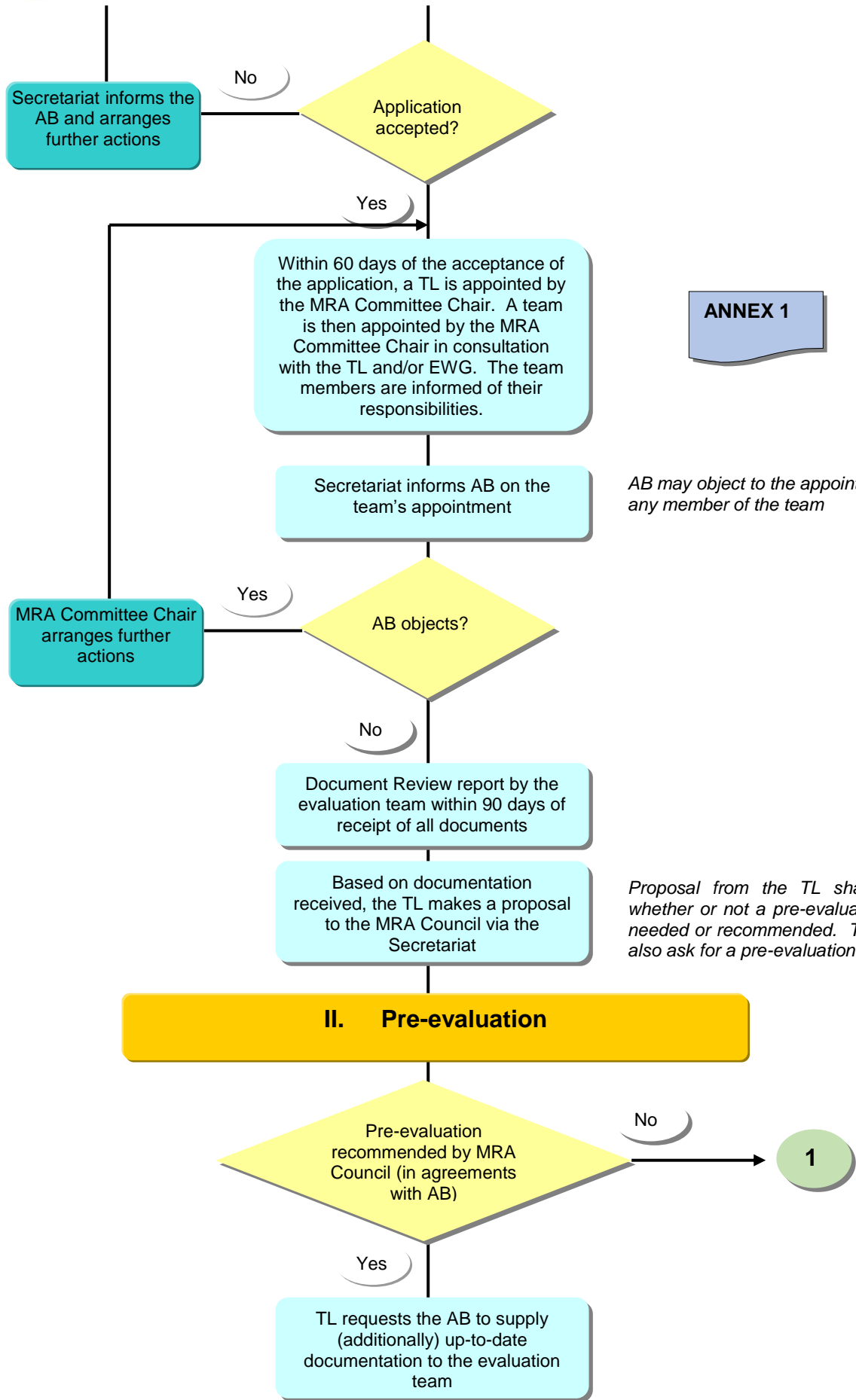


### SECTION 3: FLOWCHART FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The following procedures shall be used by SADCA for the evaluation of AB's.



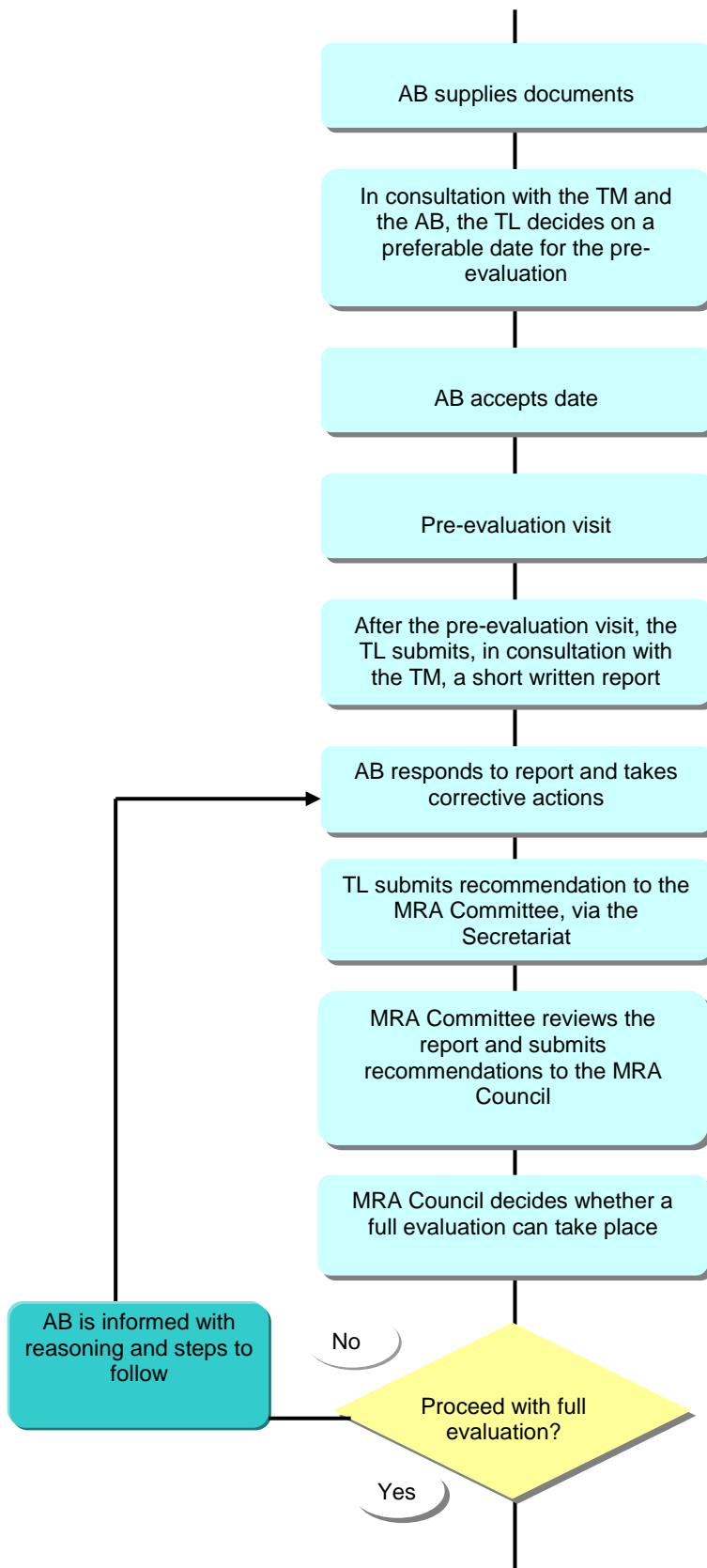




**ANNEX 1**

*AB may object to the appointment of any member of the team*

*Proposal from the TL shall indicate whether or not a pre-evaluation visit is needed or recommended. The AB can also ask for a pre-evaluation.*



*The pre-evaluation will only take place subject to the supply of the required documentation at least one month before the agreed date*

*The AB will be given the opportunity to comment on any factual errors in the report. If a pre-evaluation has taken place, the full evaluation visit will not be carried out before the AB has taken all the actions agreed at the pre-evaluation visit.*

### III. Full evaluation

1

TL request the AB to supply the required documentation to the evaluation team

*If a pre-evaluation was conducted, the same TL normally continues with the full evaluation*

AB supplies documentation

*All members of the evaluation team shall be supplied with copies of the necessary documentation at least three months in advance of the visit, or as agreed with the TL*

TL prepares a detailed program for the evaluation in consultation with TMs, the AB and the MRA Committee Chair

**ANNEX 1**

*The TL shall ensure that the AB understands and accepts that the evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with this document*

On-site evaluation (information collection including witnessing)

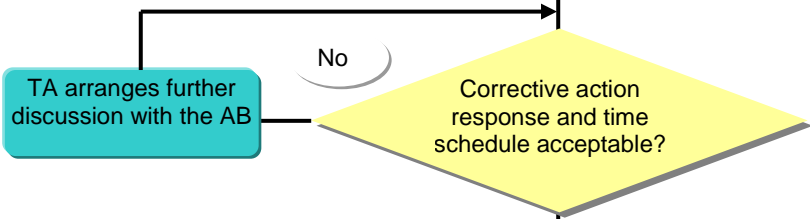
Discussion of the findings and presentation of the summary report to the AB before the evaluation team leaves

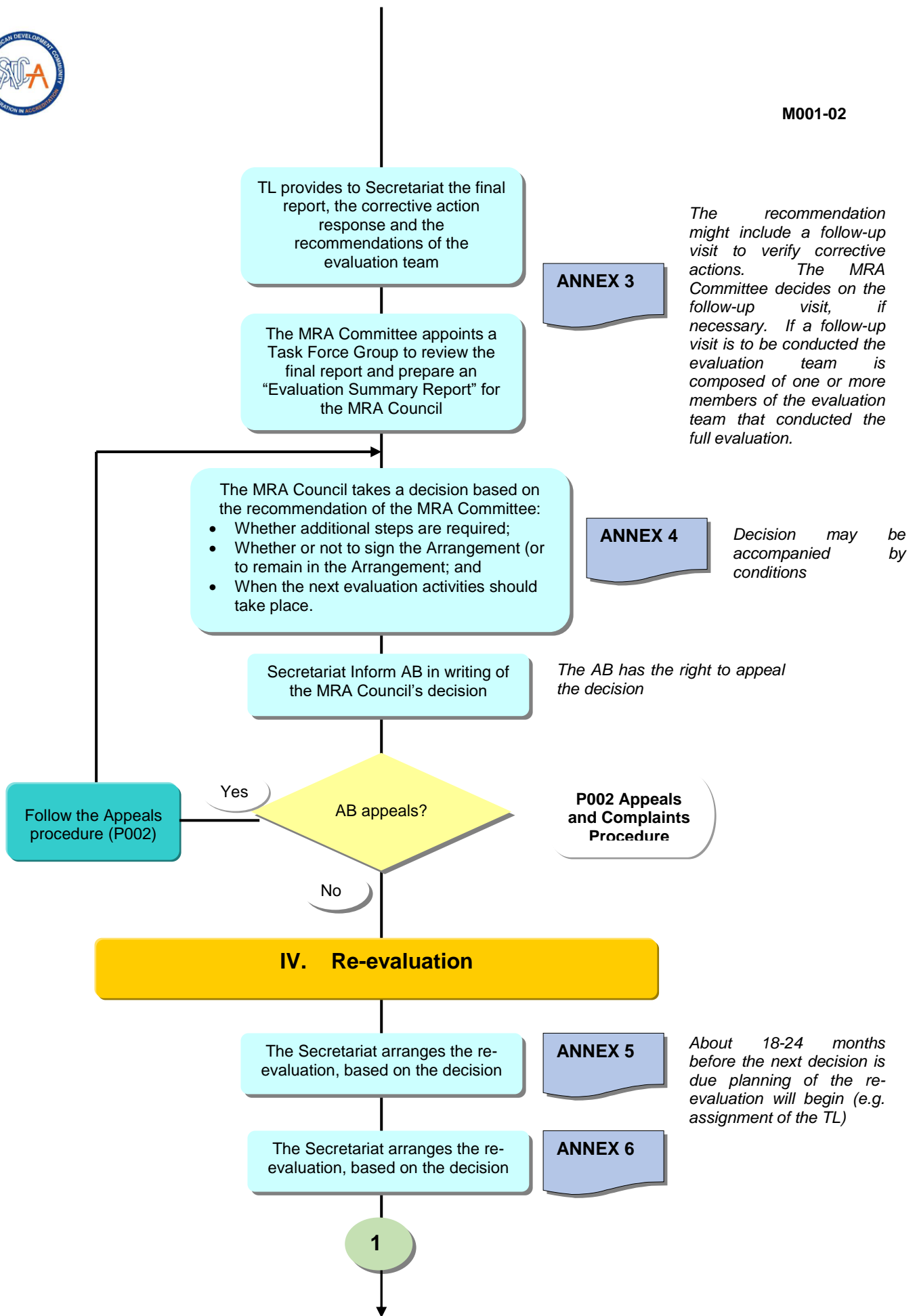
TL provides the draft report based on IAF/ILAC A3, completed in consultation with the TMs, to the AB

*The TL shall give the AB an opportunity to comment on and discuss the evaluation team's findings and recommendations and to clarify any misunderstandings that may have arisen. The evaluation team shall leave a complete summary report with the AB.*

AB responds to TL on all findings including the corrective action plan

TL, in consultation with TMs, reviews and responds to the AB's corrective action response and time schedule







## ANNEX 1: PROCEDURE FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

### 1.1 Composition of the Evaluation Team

- 1.1.1 For the full evaluation visit, members of the evaluation team shall be chosen as needed to cover the types of accreditation, the technical scopes, and the size and complexity of the accreditation system under evaluation.
- 1.1.2 Team members shall be chosen, in consultation with the TL and taking into consideration the recommendations of the Evaluators Working Group (EWG), from the list of team members (see the SADCA Register of Evaluators) qualified according to the process for the selection and qualification of evaluators, as described in P011 "Process and Procedures for Selection, Qualification and Monitoring of Evaluators", and kept up-to-date by the SADCA MRA Secretariat. This list records the scopes and sub-scopes for which the evaluator is considered competent and experienced in evaluations.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation team chosen shall consist of representatives from a cross-section of Member Accreditation Bodies. The evaluation team shall be chosen to provide a balanced set of skills so as to be able to conduct an effective evaluation of the key components of the system under examination.
- 1.1.4 No team member shall be associated with any accreditation body that has provided consultancy service to the accreditation body being evaluated within three years prior to the evaluation.
- 1.1.5 A team should not have more than two evaluators participating in their first evaluation (trainees). For the trainee evaluators on the team, a qualified mentor (an evaluator with experience in more than two evaluations) will be appointed.
- 1.1.6 A team member may, in addition to his/her evaluation tasks, mentor any "trainee peer evaluator" (those performing their first evaluation) assigned to the evaluation team. Mentoring trainees includes allocating him/her such task as he/she is capable of performing, supervising and providing a report to the MRA Committee about the performance of the trainee.

*NOTE 1: It is normal practice that evaluators from as many members as possible are appointed in a team.*

*NOTE 2: A team leader should normally be accompanied by at least one other team member for a pre-evaluation visit to ensure more than one person is involved in establishing an applicant's readiness for a full evaluation visit.*

*NOTE 3: There should, as far as possible, be no more than one team member from each economy.*

*NOTE 4: Some of the evaluation team members may have as their only task to perform witnessing at different geographical places or at different times than the rest of the evaluation team.*



## 1.2 Appointment and Duties of the Evaluation Team Leader:

- 1.2.1 In appointing an evaluation team leader for a specific evaluation, the MRA Committee Chair should not appoint the same team leader for two successive evaluations of the same applicant.
- 1.2.2 Team leaders shall be chosen from the list of team leaders (see the SADCA Register of Evaluators) prepared based on the process for the selection of team leaders described in P011” Process and Procedures for Selection, Qualification and Monitoring of Evaluators”, and kept up-to- date by the SADCA MRA Secretariat. This list records the scopes and sub-scopes for which the team leader is considered competent and experienced in evaluations.
- 1.2.3 The team leader shall have ultimate responsibilities for all phases of evaluation and is delegated authority by the MRA Council to make final decisions regarding the conduct of evaluation.

## 1.3 Appointment and Duties of the Evaluation Deputy Team Leader:

- 1.3.1 A Deputy Team Leader (Deputy TL) may be assigned. The role of the Deputy TL is to assist the TL in planning, preparation, and management of the evaluation. The Deputy TL can replace the TL in case of illness or unforeseen circumstances.
- 1.3.2 A Deputy TL can be identified one of two ways:
  - a) After a minimum of 2 peer evaluations (pre evaluations can be considered) as a TM with positive feedback from the participating TLs and ABs, a TM may be invited to become a Deputy TL if he/she has also demonstrated that he/she fulfils the conditions referred to in section 3.5.3 of P011 ”Process and Procedures for Selection, Qualification and Monitoring of Evaluators”.

*Note: The role of Deputy TL may be used as training for future Team Leader*

- b) Alternately, a deputy team leader may be an approved team leader but if assigned to a team, the Deputy TL shall have different competences than the TL to cover as much as possible of the accreditation activities of the AB under evaluation

## ANNEX 2: TYPICAL EVALUATION PROGRAM OF AN ACCREDITATION BODY

### A. Pre-evaluation program

If it is determined by SADCA or the applicant AB that a pre-evaluation of the AB is needed before the full evaluation can take place, a pre-evaluation program shall be prepared. Based on the results of the document review, the pre-evaluation team may consider reviewing the following in the context of the pre-evaluation:

- Management system policies and procedures (as part of a document review prior to the pre-evaluation visit);
- Legal identification of the AB;
- Relationships with the regulators and other specifiers (e.g. recognition; possible competition);
- Job descriptions and backgrounds of top management, organization chart;
- Impartiality and conflict of interest; related bodies;
- Access to technical expertise;
- Application documents;
- Assessor records and documents;
- Sampling of CAB assessment records, including the decision-making process;
- Proficiency testing participation levels (for testing and calibration accreditation, and inspection bodies where relevant);
- Measurement traceability routes (for testing and calibration accreditation, and inspection bodies where relevant). In some cases, it may be necessary to visit the NMI;
- Witnessing one or more assessments, if possible.

### B. Full evaluation program

#### 1. Introduction

The task of an evaluation of an AB is to collect sufficient information about the assessments and decision-making process of the AB to have confidence in the conformity assessment results from CABs accredited by the AB such that the signatories to the Arrangement can promote acceptance of these results.

It is the task of the TL to create a timetable in a timely manner prior to the evaluation of the AB that allows sufficient time to collect information for obtaining such confidence.

Because there exists a large variety of circumstances under which an evaluation will take place, it is the prerogative of the TL to deviate from the examples shown in 3.2 of this Annex. The TL should agree with the team members on the duration. Consultation with the accreditation body under evaluation is essential. When the proposed timetable largely differs from the examples of 3.2.2 of this Annex or when additional evaluation team capacity is required, the Chair of the MRA Committee should also be consulted at an early stage.



## 2. Considerations

### 2.1 Maximum Duration

The TL should arrange the evaluation to take place in the shortest possible time, preferably within one full (7 days) week. If witnessing is not possible during the week of the formal evaluation and if no alternatives are possible, the TL should schedule witnessing to be performed in the weeks preceding the evaluation. This will allow for a well-founded closing meeting in which all fact finding can be reviewed and discussed. It is additionally advised to use only experienced team members for such parts of the evaluation.

### 2.2 Types of Evaluation

There are different kinds of evaluation: e.g. initial evaluation, pre-evaluations, follow-up evaluations, evaluation for scope extensions, re-evaluation. Given the long interval (approximately 4 years) between evaluations, the duration of a re-evaluation is comparable to that of an initial evaluation. A shorter duration applies for pre-evaluations, for follow-up evaluations and for scope extensions that are conducted separately from a re-evaluation.

### 2.3 Witnessing

The evaluation team shall consider how to deal with witnessing.  
For every level 3 there shall be:

- One witness of an initial assessment or re-assessment of a CAB.
  - While full assessments are preferred, other on-site assessment activities may be considered. When the witnessing of other on-site assessment activities takes the place of the witnessing of a full assessment or re-assessment, then those activities must include all of the accreditation requirements and assessment of a portion of the scope of accreditation. The key is that the evaluation team witness the performance of technical activities of the CAB as much as possible;
- or two other on-site assessment activities, including a portion of the scope of accreditation which may each only include parts of the accreditation requirements.

The evaluation team shall also witness other reassessments and assessments activities as determined by the team leader or the MRA Committee.

For certification and validation/ verification, the evaluation team should witness the AB assessment team performing the assessment of the body only at the office location.

**Note:** For definitions of Level 2 and Level 3, please refer to IAF PR 4 or ILAC R6, as applicable.

### 2.4 Size of the Accreditation Body

The influence of the AB's scope on the duration of the evaluation (on-site part) relates primarily to the number of witnessing activities. The AB's management





system may not differ (see ISO/IEC 17011) too much when the AB has one activity or several activities. When there is a large difference in the number of accreditations in the various fields, the TL may decide to place more emphasis on witnessing in the larger field(s).

Since Memoranda of Understanding (e.g. with regulators or specifiers of the AB's economy) are being concluded with certain industry sectors, specific attention may be needed to assure the AB's competence to assess in these fields.

It must be stressed that, despite spending time on witnessing, it is very important to spend ample time to check on how an AB selects its assessors and experts for a particular assessment. Thorough checking of records from assessments is required including matching the assessor's expertise to the scope of the CAB being assessed.

## 2.5 Other Factors

Factors that may influence the duration of the evaluation include:

- Need for translators;
- Extensive travel and travel circumstance; and
- Cultural differences.

This annex cannot provide guidance on all these items. It is left to the team members and their experience to judge these effects and to cater to them in such a way that there is no compromise to the principle stated in the introduction to this annex.

## 3. Managing the evaluation

### 3.1 Preparation and Planning

- 3.1.1 The time for the evaluators to spend on preparation largely depends on the quality of the documents that the AB forwards. The documents that are required are specified in form F007 "SADCA MRA Application Form). Accurate translation of the documents into English by the AB is essential.
- 3.1.2 The self-assessment document (IAF/ILAC A3) and the cross-reference table (form F026) shall be detailed and accurate. These documents will greatly assist the evaluation team in preparation. If the self-assessment document (IAF/ILAC A3) does not provide adequate information to the team, the team leader can ask the AB to revise the document with the necessary information.
- 3.1.3 The AB shall send all documents to the evaluation team, at least 3 months in advance of a visit to allow for preparation and for requesting additional information.
- 3.1.4 The team members should start reviewing the documents directly after receipt. In essence the team leader should be able to prepare a part of the report with background information **before** the on-site evaluation. This part of the preparation is the same for all types of evaluations. The total time



involved in studying the documentation may take an average of 3 to 5 days for the TL and 2 to 4 days for the team members.

3.1.5 For planning of the witnessing, the AB shall provide the assessment planning. This gives the evaluation team the opportunity to carefully select and plan the witnessing activities taking into consideration the following:

- standards for accreditation,
- number of accredited CAB,
- size of the fields,
- initial evaluation/re-evaluation,
- witnessed assessments from the last evaluation,
- cross frontier accreditation policy and relative procedures.

If the applicant or signatory is active in the framework of an industry or regulator specific scheme, then the fulfilling of the requirements set by that industry group or by regulators for accreditation bodies shall also be considered on a sampling basis.

### 3.2 On-site Evaluation

3.2.1 The evaluation team should be prepared to undertake long working days during the on-site evaluation.

An on-site visit typically consists of:

- Opening meeting, presentation by team leader outlining aims, objectives and procedure to be used by evaluation team (refer to SADCA F018 SADCA Peer Evaluation Meetings Agendas);
- Evaluation of the AB's offices and management system, review of files and records;
- Discussing of the results of the self-assessment document (IAF/ILAC A3);
- Evaluation of the assessment reports, including preparation of the assessment and decision-making records (and possible witnessing of the accreditation decision-making process.);
- Splitting of the team in accordance with their experiences for the purpose of witness including the on-site preparation of the draft evaluation report with a list of findings;
- Witness of a CAB for every scope (see Clause B 2.3 of this annex);
- Discussion of the results of the witnessing with the evaluation team and AB; and
- Closing meeting, presentation and discussion of findings.



Some timetable examples are shown below:

### 3.2.2 ABs with single scope

Day	Actions	Evaluators
Day 1	3 hours for preparation with the evaluation team Office, opening meeting, records, etc. (key issues to be addressed + evaluation plan)	TL + 2 TM
Day 2	Office + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 2 TM
Day 3	Office + witnessing staff + preparation final report + closing meeting	TL + 2 TM
Day 4 morning	Discussing further actions for TMs + departure	TL + 2 TM

### 3.2.3 ABs with 2 scopes

Day	Actions	Evaluators
Day 1	3 hours for preparation with the evaluation team Office, opening meeting, records, etc. (key issues to be addressed + evaluation plan)	TL + 2 TM
Day 2	Office + preparation for witnessing assessments	TL + 2 TM
Day 3	Office + witnessing staff + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 2 TM
Day 4	Same + preparation final report + closing meeting	TL + 2 TM
Day 5 morning	Discussing further actions for TMs + departure	TL + 2 TM

### 3.2.4 ABs with 3 scopes

Day	Actions	Evaluators
Sunday	>= 4 hours for preparation with the evaluation team (key issues to be addressed + evaluation plan)	TL + 3 TM
Monday	Office, opening meeting, records, etc. + preparation for witnessing assessments	TL + 3 TM
Tuesday	Office + witnessing staff + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 3 TM
Wednesday	Office + witnessing staff + vertical audits + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 3 TM
Thursday	Office + witnessing staff + vertical audits (specially directed for confirmation of previous findings) + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 3 TM
Friday	Preparation final report + closing meeting + Discussing further actions for TMs + departure	TL + 3 TM

### 3.2.5 ABs with full scope

Day	Actions	Evaluators
Sunday	>= 4 hours for preparation with the evaluation team (key issues to be addressed + evaluation plan)	TL + 4 TM
Monday	Office, opening meeting, records, etc. + preparation for witnessing assessments	TL + 4 TM
Tuesday	Office + witnessing staff + witnessing assessments	TL + 4 TM



Day	Actions	Evaluators
	(split evaluation team)	
Wednesday	Office + witnessing staff + vertical audits + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 4 TM
Thursday	Office + witnessing staff + vertical audits (specially directed for confirmation of previous findings) + witnessing assessments (split evaluation team)	TL + 4 TM
Friday	Same + Preparation final report + closing meeting	TL + 4 TM
Saturday	Discussing further actions for TMs + departure	

*NOTE: This is guidance only. In some regions it is common for a four-person (laboratory accreditation evaluation) team to witness up to 10 different laboratories, during a five-day evaluation. Where the NMI is not a signatory to the CIPM MRA or where the NMI's CMCs are not listed in the BIPM database, the evaluation team should consider the need to visit the NMI and any designated institute so as to evaluate the traceability routes available to accredited laboratories. The emphasis should be on witnessing enough to have confidence in the accreditation process, and a high level of confidence in the competence of the accredited bodies.*

3.2.6 The team members should meet to discuss their findings and possibly adjust the focus of their attention. The TL will need to add/modify/enhance the preliminary report that resulted from the studying of the documentation and discuss such changes during the week with the team members. The TL may also require the AB to provide a general description of the AB to be used in the report.

### 3.3 Activities after the On-site Evaluation

3.3.1 Electronic means to communicate with the team members should be sufficient to provide feedback and support as the TL prepares the final report for the AB.

3.3.2 The evaluation team needs to spend time on reviewing the AB's corrective actions and on the preparation of the evaluation team's comment to these corrective actions. The TL should take the lead in preparing this reaction.

3.3.3 Finally the TL shall prepare a recommendation to the MRA Council for their decision.

3.3.4 Typically these activities may take 2-3 days for the TL. For TMs, the time involved may be limited to 0.5 days.

3.3.5 Writing the Evaluation Report: IAF/ILAC A3 contains information concerning the structure and timeline for writing and presenting a report.



### **ANNEX 3: CONTENT OF THE EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT ON AN ACCREDITATION BODY**

This report is prepared by the Task Force Group appointed by the MRA Committee for presentation to the MRA Council. SADCA form F017 “Evaluation Summary Report and Recommendations to the MRA Council” shall be used by the TFG

The TFG report should cover the following:

Task Force Group (TFG) composition:

Accreditation Body evaluated and date of evaluation:

**Nature and scope(s) of evaluation:**

**Evaluation team members and scope(s):**

**Review of the evaluation process and final:**

The date the report was submitted to the TFG

The due date agreed on for completion of the TFG Report

Witnessed assessments

Compliance to requirements

Final report format

Findings of the evaluation team

Interactions with team and/or AB

Recommendations to the MRA Council

Recommendations of the SADCA Evaluation Team

Recommendations and justification of the TFG

*NOTE: The TFG report may address remarks and conclusions, and comments on the process. Issues for consideration may include:*

- Were SADCA procedures followed?
- Was the appropriate normative documents applied?
- Does the report contain sufficient information to support a decision?
- Are the conclusions and recommendations supported by the report?
- Are the findings appropriately classified, clear and concise?
- Is the proposed/implemented corrective action appropriate to the finding?
- Were the findings appropriately closed?
- Were there any issues raised by the TFG that required a response from the team?



## ANNEX 4: PROCEDURE FOR DECISION MAKING REGARDING EVALUATIONS OF AN ACCREDITATION BODY

### 1. Decision making regarding SADCA evaluations

- 1.1 The evaluation report, the corrective actions and the recommendations of the team leader shall be submitted as the final report to the Chair of the MRA Committee and the SADCA Secretariat.
  - 1.1.1 The Secretariat shall distribute reports on all evaluation visits to the MRA Committee and MRA Council members for decision making.
  - 1.1.2 Regulators or other observers who are allowed to attend the decision-making meetings, may also be provided with the evaluation/re-evaluation report for a given AB, with the MRA Council and AB's written permission.
- 1.2 The Chair of the MRA Committee may appoint a Task Force Group to review the final evaluation reports and prepare a summary report for the MRA Council.
- 1.3 All members and observers of the SADCA MRA Committee and SADCA MRA Council may send their comments to the TFG for their consideration.
- 1.4 The task of the TFG is to evaluate the report for comprehensiveness, clarity and the classification of findings. The TFG is to complete a proposal for an Evaluation Summary Report, using F017 "Evaluation Summary Report and Recommendations to the MRA Council". The TFG shall provide the proposed Evaluation Summary Report to the Secretariat and the Chair of the SADCA MRA Committee within 30 days of the TFG receiving the evaluation report.
- 1.5 The TFG is expected to communicate with the evaluation team and, if necessary, with the AB under evaluation; in cases where there are open, missing or unclear issues in the report, in order to solve or clarify them. The Secretariat and the Chair of the SADCA MRA Committee shall be copied on all communications.
- 1.6 The SADCA MRA Committee will review the draft Evaluation Summary Report prepared by the TFG, within 30 days after the reception, and make any changes as necessary before submitting it, together with their recommendation, to the SADCA MRA Council for their decision.
- 1.7 The MRA Council shall decide:
  - in the case of an initial evaluation, whether or not the applicant may enter the Arrangement;
  - in the case of a re-evaluation, whether or not the accreditation body will remain a signatory to the Arrangement. Positive decisions can be accompanied by conditions (see Clause 2 of this Annex).

*NOTE 1: The MRA Council may decide to carry out a re-evaluation, partly or totally prior to the normal 4-year period. Normally this would be the case after initial evaluations or fundamental re-organizations.*



NOTE 2: For voting rules see the SADCA Bylaws.

- 1.8 Any Team Leader or Team Member involved in an evaluation cannot cast the vote when that evaluation decision is made.

## 2. TFG Competencies

- 2.1. To appreciate comprehensiveness the TFG will need to have an understanding of what should be in a report from a generic and specific perspective. The TFG shall have collective expertise at levels 1, 2 and 3 of the SADCA Arrangement.
- 2.2. The TFG needs to understand; the planning and conduct of the evaluation, its breadth and depth, the findings and their classification, and the adequacy of the conclusions, and recommendations. The competencies required would be consistent with that of an individual with experience as a CB auditor or an AB assessor, and exposure to the policies and procedures of SADCA, as well as practical experience in the peer evaluation process.
- 2.3. To be able to effectively correspond with the team, the TFG convener requires good communication skills and an understanding of the criteria and process. The competencies would be similar to those listed in point 2.5.2 above.
- 2.4. At least one member appointed to the TFG, shall be a qualified peer evaluator.

## 3. Hierarchy of decisions

- 3.1 Decisions made as a result of peer evaluations can take many forms. Implicit in these decisions is the possibility of a variety of "conditions". This guidance outlines a hierarchy of the major types of decisions from the most positive decision to the least positive decision; conditions of increasing severity are imposed.
- 3.2 The SADCA MRA Council makes all decisions on MRA signatories.
- 3.3 Decisions shall be made in a period of 30 days after the review made by the MRA Committee TFG. The MRA Council members participating in the decision making shall have an understanding of: objective and purpose of the Arrangement; criteria used for the evaluation; the evaluation process and the arrangement structure. There are primarily two situations to address: *new applicant accreditation bodies* and *signatory accreditation bodies*. A third situation that is not addressed below is the possibility of adverse decisions or sanctions imposed on an Arrangement signatory which fails to abide by its obligations under the Arrangement itself.
- 3.4 Decisions on new applicant accreditation bodies:
  - Approval without conditions (re-evaluation to occur 4 years hence);





- Approval with conditions (e.g. shortened interval for re-evaluation);
- Defer approval pending submittal of required evidence of corrective actions and/or re-visit by one or more members of the evaluation team to confirm implementation of corrective actions; and
- Disapproval with a new evaluation required.

Note: Disapproval should rarely happen for new applicant accreditation bodies since an evaluation report is normally only submitted for a decision once a consensus of the evaluation team and the SADCA MRA Committee has concluded that all requirements have been met.

#### **4. Decision making regarding joint evaluations**

- 4.1 When SADCA carries out a joint evaluation of an accreditation body with another Regional Group, ILAC or IAF (referred to in this section as “the other organisation”), SADCA and the other organisation shall agree on how to proceed with the decision on that particular evaluation, whether it will be through a joint Task Force Group (TFG), or whether their separate decision-making processes will be followed, ensuring that each organisation makes its own separate decision.

Refer to SADCA P004 “Joint evaluations with other regional cooperations.

- 4.2 Should SADCA and the other organisation decide to appoint a joint Task Force Group (TFG), it shall include members from each organisation to review the evaluation report. The SADCA MRA Committee Chair and Chair of the other organisation’s Management Committee (MC) will appoint one of the members of the TFG to be the convener. The role of convener for these TFGs will alternate between SADCA and the other organisation. The TFG members shall comply with the TFG Competency requirements as in Clause 2 of this Annex 4. Members of the TFG will have signed a confidentiality statement. The evaluation team and the evaluated body should be informed about the establishment of the TFG and the members.
- 4.3 There should be a balance of members with competencies on the SADCA MRA and on the Arrangement of the other organisation.
- 4.4 Issues of common interest for both organisations will be discussed jointly by both management committees, while issues that apply only to SADCA or the other organisation may either be discussed in a joint meeting or in separate meetings of the respective management committee.





## **ANNEX 5: PROCEDURE FOR RE-EVALUATION OF A SADCA SIGNATORY AND ONGOING CONFIDENCE BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

1. Periodic monitoring and re-evaluation of the Arrangement signatories is necessary (see also Annex 1).
2. All Arrangement signatories shall be formally re-evaluated at maximum intervals of four years from the last day of the previous evaluation.
3. The Signatory under re-evaluation shall provide the evaluation team with all the documents which are required for an initial evaluation (see *Application form F007, item 20*). In addition the evaluation team shall get the full evaluation report from the last evaluation/re-evaluation or any special evaluation.
4. Partial to total re-evaluation may be conducted at an earlier date as directed by the MRA Council, should there be due cause such as notification of significant changes in administration, finances, operational practices or an extension of the scope of accreditation available.
5. The impact of changes notified by an arrangement signatory shall be evaluated (see Section 2, Clause 2.2.2).
6. Re-evaluation visits should be led by an evaluation team, in which the majority of members will not have been in the evaluation team that undertook the previous evaluation.

## **ANNEX 6: PROCEDURES FOR MAINTENANCE, REDUCTION, SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF SADCA SIGNATORIES**

1. It may be that the MRA Council cannot accept the significant changes notified by the accreditation body, the corrective action taken by this accreditation body, major non-conformities which have been found or substantiated complaints from interested parties. The MRA Council will take appropriate action, which can be suspension for a maximum period of 6 months, reduction of scope or withdrawal from the Arrangement.
2. Maintenance, reduction of scope, suspension or withdrawal of a signatory body shall be decided by the MRA Council after receipt of the recommendation by the MRA Committee.
3. Any suspension, reduction of scope or withdrawal decided by the MRA Council shall be accompanied by an appropriate explanation stating the reason for suspension, reduction or withdrawal to the signatory.
4. An Arrangement Member may request for voluntary reduction of scope, withdrawal or suspension from the Arrangement, including downgrading the membership category for whatever reason. The request shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat and MRA Council Chair and supported by reasons. The MRA Council shall consider the request and the reasons provided, and where no alternative solution is possible, grant the request.
5. The MRA Council shall immediately suspend, reduce the scope or withdraw an accreditation body from the Arrangement if it receives notification from ILAC/IAF that it is, for any reason, suspended, the scope reduced or withdrawn as a member of ILAC/IAF.
6. In the event of a decision to suspend, SADCA shall:
  - a) officially notify the accreditation body of the decision to suspend, the reasons for the decision to suspend, the period of the suspension, and the conditions for lifting of the suspension;
  - b) Prior to taking further action on the decision to suspend, notify the accreditation body of their right to Appeal the decision (see P002 "Appeals and Complaints Procedure);
  - c) If the appeal is not upheld, amend the list of Arrangement signatories to identify that the body is suspended;
  - d) notify all Arrangement signatories of the suspension; and
  - e) remind the accreditation body of the consequences of suspension.
7. The consequences of suspension shall be decided by the MRA Council on a case-by-case basis, depending on the reason for suspension. The consequences of suspension may include, for the applicable main scope and/or sub-scope that the AB shall:
  - a) not actively promote the fact that they are a signatory to the Arrangement;
  - b) not issue any accreditation documents that bear the SADCA MRA Mark;
  - c) not participate in any ballots associated with the Arrangement;
  - d) notify all accredited CABs of the suspension and the consequences of the suspension as it relates to them; and
  - e) notify stakeholders in their economies of the suspension.
8. The obligations of the accreditation body while suspended are:
  - a) continue to comply with the obligations of full membership;



- b) cooperate fully with the MRA Committee and MRA Council to enable a speedy resolution of the suspension;
  - c) maintain oversight of their accredited CABs; and
  - d) continue to vote on SADCA ballots, other than those associated with the Arrangement.
9. In the event of withdrawal, SADCA shall:
- a) officially notify the accreditation body of the withdrawal and the reasons for the withdrawal;
  - b) prior to taking action on the decision to withdraw, notify the accreditation body of their right to Appeal the decision;
  - c) if the appeal is not upheld, amend the list of Arrangement signatories to withdraw the signatory;
  - d) notify all Arrangement signatories of the withdrawal;
  - e) terminate the agreement for use of the SADCA MRA Mark; and
  - f) remind the accreditation body of the consequences of withdrawal.
10. The consequences of withdrawal, for the applicable main scope or sub-scope of the Arrangement are that the AB shall:
- a) immediately stop promoting the fact that they are a signatory to the Arrangement;
  - b) immediately stop issuing any accreditation documents that bear the SADCA MRA Mark; and
  - c) notify all accredited CABs of the withdrawal and terminate all relevant Agreements for the Use of the IAF MLA Mark and/or the ILAC MRA Mark, as applicable.
11. When a withdrawn accreditation body applies to become an Arrangement member again, the procedure for new applicants shall be followed.

## **ANNEX 7: DISCLOSURE OF PEER EVALUATION REPORTS**

Reports from peer evaluations managed by SADCA shall not be made available in the public domain.

A peer evaluated Accreditation Body may, however, choose to make the full report available to its interested parties with the purpose of promoting the acceptance of the SADCA MRA or IAF/ILAC MLA/MRA under the conditions detailed below:

1. The peer evaluation report shall not be disclosed until it has been formally considered by SADCA MRA Council and a decision has been confirmed;
2. The SADCA Secretariat shall provide to the peer-evaluated Accreditation Body on request the documents that may be collectively disclosed to the relevant interested parties. The documents shall include the full evaluation report, including the responses to the findings and all other annexes, and the MRA Council resolution(s) related to the peer-evaluation. All references to any specific conformity assessment body and assessors, as applicable, shall be removed by the Secretariat from the documents.
3. The documentation provided by the SADCA Secretariat to the Accreditation body shall be disclosed collectively together with an appropriate statement as to the confidential nature of the information, i.e. the information shall remain confidential to the peer-evaluated body and the recipient.



## ANNEX A: AMENDMENT RECORD

<b>Proposed by</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Change</b>
Secretariat	All	Revision of entire document and alignment to IAF/ILAC-A2:03/2018